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ABSTRACT

This publication provides a review of the research on issues relating to the gap in achievement between high- and low-performing students, focussing specifically on the topics of retention in grade, remediation of students who are underachieving, and accelerated instruction. Following the executive summary and introductory material, three sections respond to the following questions: (1) Does retention work? If not, why not? (2) Does student remediation help? What kind, if any, helps close the gap? and (3) What helps students the most? Part 1 explains why grade retention does not work and why it persists. The second part describes what works and offers highlights of current efforts to reform Chapter 1 programs. Part 3 describes accelerated instruction, restructured environments, and teacher recruitment, preparation, and development as innovative ways to increase student achievement. Finally, the three most formidable predictors of failure for at-risk students are identified--deficit model schools, dysfunctional families, and a disengaged society. An extensive bibliography is included. (LMI)

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Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs Remediation and The Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement

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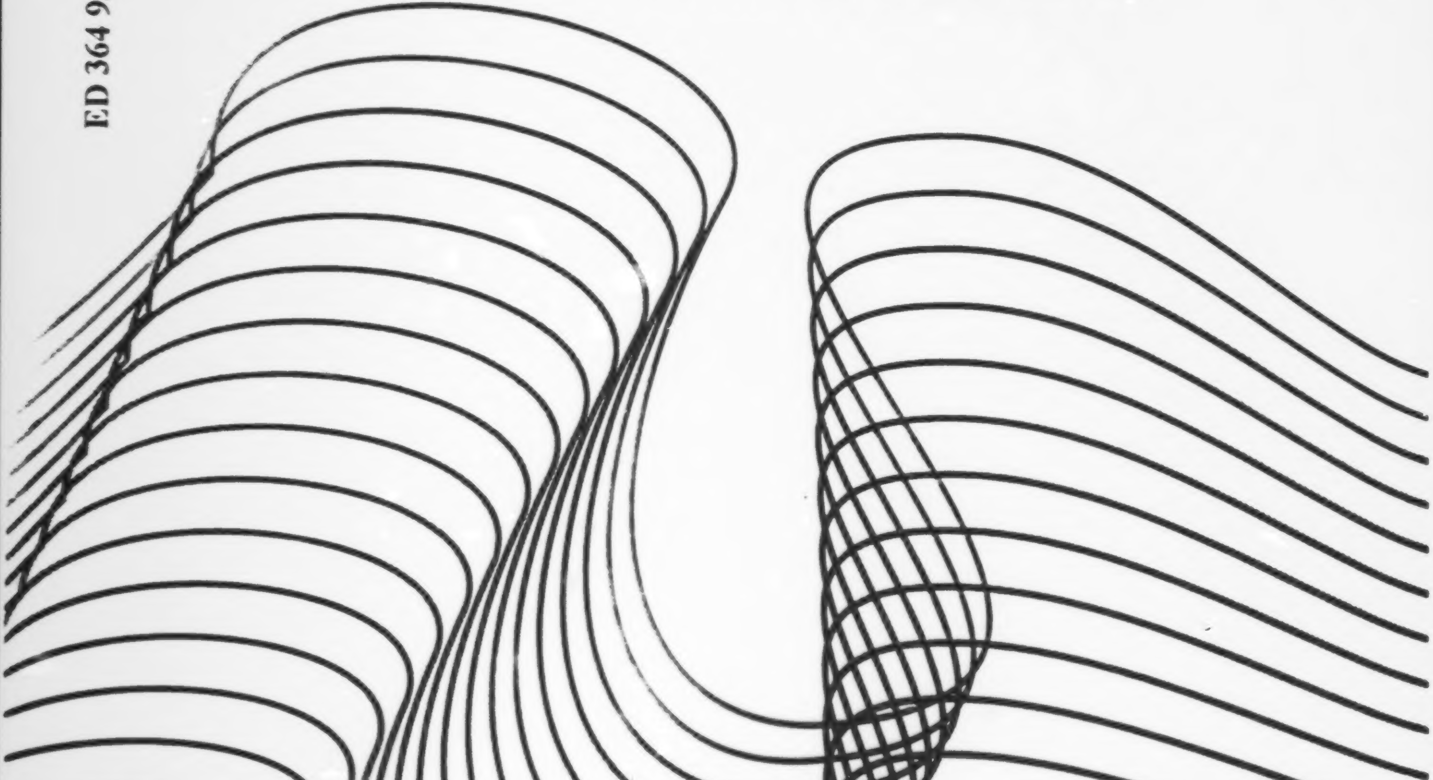

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The Commissioner's Critical
Issue Analysis Series
Number 1
1993

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To fill a gap
Insert the thing that caused it—

Block it up
With Other—and 'twill yawn the more—

You cannot solder an Abyss
With Air.

Emily Dickinson

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This report was prepared by the Texas Education Agency's Division of Exemplary Instruction in an effort to provide research to site-based teams of educators on issues relating to the gap in achievement between high- and low-performing students. This research includes extensive discussion of the practices of retention in grade, remediation, and accelerated instruction as they relate to the gap in achievement.

This research was completed with the considerable assistance of many: Dr. Jay Cummings, Mike Gula, Cathy Cox, Dr. Maurine Scheevel, Mary Ragland, Dr. Joe Johnson, and many others provided sustained support throughout the process. The writer especially appreciates the efforts of the many individuals and groups who facilitated the gathering of research materials, especially Jan Anderson and Linda Kemp among others in the library and media services of the Texas Education Agency.

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Executive Summary

The Commissioner's Critical Issue Analysis Series is designed to review the research on issues of importance to practitioners, policy-makers, and a general audience of educators in the state. Because issues examined in this inquiry have immense impact on the lives of students in at-risk situations, provision of the best solutions research can offer will support gains in both equity and excellence for a large and growing population of students.

The research reviewed is the most recent available on the topics of retention in grade, remediation of students who are underachieving, and accelerated instruction–a total quality approach to closing the achievement gap between high and low-performing students.

Not surprisingly, the most recent literature on retention in grade, like the decades of research before it, shows the practice to be almost entirely counter-productive. The research details the vast quantity of studies designed to test various hypotheses about students. What results is a rare and nearly unanimous voice in the annals of education research opposing retention in any form.

At significant expense to the state and to their ultimate welfare, about 5.2 percent of Texas students are retained in grade each year. In response to this literature and in view of its fiscal consequences, House Bill 1314 was passed in 1991 to facilitate implementation of practices other than retention. Unwilling and unable to pass students who have not mastered the curriculum, and striving not to retain students under the guidance of the research and of House Bill 1314, schools are subsequently caught in a difficult dilemma: they are unable to pass students who have not mastered the curriculum while feeling committed to promote students under the guidance of House Bill 1314. The usual and customary recourse–traditional remediation–also gets mixed reviews.

Accelerated Instruction, or building quality into the process of education, particularly for students in at-risk situations, holds immense promise. This model of total school renewal involves immersion in an values and beliefs, "ideology," a systems approach to implementation, broad-based assessment, a multiage environment, and numerous other implications detailed in the description of accelerated instruction. Accelerated Instruction focuses curricular priorities around student needs and builds on student strengths. When thoroughly instituted, accelerated instruction eliminates the need for the tracking that often occurs with remediation, the need for remedial courses to "catch kids up" in TAAS scores, and the need for retention in grade. A wide variety of implications of accelerated instruction are explored.

"Change" is apparently the watchword for the '90's, but that word cannot exist without another. As schools see the inevitable need for a thoroughgoing overhaul, individuals as well as whole systems will need either to change or step aside. Commitment to the survival and success of the students in our schools and to those upon whom this research focuses–students in at-risk situations–is not negotiable. About this endeavor the research is also unambivalent: securing and undergirding the future of students in at-risk situations requires a statewide and national commitment, the scope of which educators are just beginning to grasp.

A succinct summary of this research, included below and designed to attract teacher interest, will be available in the form of a "Program Advisory" to school practitioners in an electronic conference. Consult tenet.tea. public-info.

Program Advisory

What Happens to Students Who Are Retained in the Same Grade?

How Can We Best Remediate Students Who Are Underachieving Or Are In At-Risk Situations?

RETAINING STUDENTS IN GRADE

Have you ever wondered what happens to the students you retain for another year of school in the same grade?

Did you know that in School Year 1992-1993 over 38 percent of Texas 9th graders were overage for their grade? Yet older is **not** better, and more time in the same grade is not what students need. Researchers for the last twenty years or more have done extensive data collecting and analysis of the future of students in Texas and nationwide who have been retained for a second year in grade, or "flunked." In over 800 studies, researchers repeatedly find that keeping students back another year proves to be a counter-productive strategy. Students held back seldom "catch up" academically. In fact, they often fall further behind and very often drop out. Did you know that, after being retained twice, a student is 90 percent likely to drop out of school? Yet this practice continues and is even growing in Texas. Too often decisions to retain are not based on a broad spectrum of indicators but simply on test scores. Teachers, principals and parents are encouraged to use a wide variety of criteria to judge student progress and to abandon retention as a form of remediation.

NEW STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS IN AT-RISK SITUATIONS

If retaining students in the same grade for a second year doesn't work for their long-term benefit, what can teachers do for those not passing classes or tests?

Texas teachers are looking at new and better ways to help students in at-risk situations. The definition of "remediation" is gradually changing to include more practices once thought singularly to benefit gifted students–differentiated teaching styles, hands-on learning, projects and products, accelerated content, compacting, blended high-tech academic/vocational education core curricula, and more. Research indicates that remedial instruction, because it tends to be broad, repetitive and basic, often fails to motivate those students most in the need of high interest levels. Further, "skills drills" do not prepare students for success in life or in the thought processes needed to succeed on TAAS. Changes in Chapter 1 funding patterns have also given schools the flexibility to do heterogeneous grouping of remedial and non-remedial students. When minimally-achieving students can watch, learn, grow, and contribute to classes of moderate as well as high-achieving students, research shows tremendous gains.

THE GROUPING DILEMMA

Everyone's talking about grouping differently, teaming, and eliminating tracking. What guidelines would a busy, resourceful teacher use?

Grouping is a function of instruction, and the research indicates that most students learn more when they are learning with students of widely varying abilities. Grouping strategies for various subjects naturally differ; even in an interdisciplinary curriculum, some small group and some large group as well as some heterogeneous and some homogeneous grouping will best facilitate learning. Studies show that flexible scheduling, administrative support, and plenty of professional development over a 6-10 year period can help schools reorganize to allow for new grouping strategies. This is being encouraged in Texas. While it is a long-term goal, this challenging, stressful, and system-wide change has been shown to bring renewal to Texas teachers as well as students along with greater equity, markedly higher test scores, and gains in overall achievement.

What does the research say about grouping for gifted students?

First, parents, teachers, administrators, and others in the school system must differentiate between the academically able and often advantaged high achieving students and those who are appropriately called "gifted." "Gifted" students will represent 2-5 percent of all populations. Accurate identification of giftedness requires use of a number of identification criteria across a total population of students.

Second, researchers indicate that homogeneous grouping best facilitates academic learning for the truly gifted. Schools may wish to homogeneously group the 2-5 percent of the students who are gifted for academic concentrations while heterogeneously grouping for meeting of affective and social needs; schools may also wish to differentiate the process and the products of the curriculum for gifted students within a heterogeneous grouping.

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR CHAPTER 1 EFFORTS MORE EFFECTIVE?

Many teachers are aware that pull-out strategies, even pull-out computer labs, for students in at-risk situations are stigmatizing and not very effective. Instead, teachers are using strategies developed by Henry M. Levin and others called "accelerated instruction." Accelerated instruction builds on the strengths students already have, features high expectations for all, holds deadlines by which students will be expected to meet particular educational requirements, offers stimulating and diverse instructional practices, and joins all entities–parents, senior citizens, and social agencies into the plan, providing a general framework for school restructuring.

Rather than an add-on program for those who have fallen behind, an accelerated program changes the entire system of a school to facilitate the success of all students. Heterogeneous grouping eliminates the stigma of remediation and a more narrow focus allows all students to explore material in greater and more stimulating depth. Teachers make the vital decisions about instruction; the principal is the instructional leader who guides the implementation and informs the public. Unity of purpose, feelings of effectiveness, and building on students' and teachers' strengths, not deficits, are the hallmarks of accelerated instruction.

KEEPING CURRENT ON AND CREATING RESEARCH

Administrators and teachers are responsibile to understand and learn more about how their decisions affect students by remaining current in the research and becoming involved in it themselves. Principals, superintendents, policymakers and the community should provide teachers the opportunities, conditions, and tools to become informed researchers regarding their own practice, able to reflect and improve. A growing awareness of the need for research done by classroom teachers and not by professors has informed many of the university/school partnerships being spawned by various collaboratives across the nation.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CHANGING MY SCHOOL SO IT IS MORE EFFECTIVE WITH STUDENTS IN AT-RISK SITUATIONS?

A brief annotated bibliography is attached; you may also contact the Division of Accelerated Instruction at the Texas Education Agency at 512-463-9374 for additional information on accelerated instruction, the names of Texas schools already functioning in an accelerated model, and for a full research review of the topics explored in this Advisory.

Annotated Bibliography

Retaining Students in Grade

Shepard, Lorrie A. and Smith, Mary Lee, "Synthesis of Research on Grade Retention." *Educational Leadership*, May 1990, pp. 84-88.

Center for Evaluation, Development, and Research (CEDR). *Retention in Grade: Looking for Alternatives*. Phi Delta Kappa "Hot Topics" Series, January 1992.

Scheeval, Maureen. "Older is Better, Right? Not Really," *Research Briefs*, Texas Education Agency, Winter 1991.

The work of researchers Shephard and Smith provides an extensive summary of the literature on retention. It includes many different examples of ways in which retention affects students and constitutes what is rather rare in educational research–a thorough consensus that retaining students in grade or in transition programs has long-term counterproductive effects on students. The CEDR collection includes a great number of articles on retention, school readiness, retention implications, and alternatives to retention. Scheeval discusses retention issues in Texas.

Remediation And More Effective Teaching of Chapter 1 Students

Anderson, Lorin W. and Pellicer, Leonard O. "Synthesis of Research on Compensatory and Remedial Education." *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 48, No. 1, September 1990, pp. 10-16.

Haberman, Martin. "The Pedagogy of Poverty Versus Good Teaching," *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1991, pp. 290-294.

Fink, Stephen. "How We Restructured Our Categorical Programs." *Educational Leadership*, October 1992, pp. 42-43.

Anderson and Pellicer concentrate on strategies that have been shown to have beneficial effects on students who are not mastering material in school; Haberman approaches remediation from the basis that ideology matters–that is, we need to understand why skills drills blunt students' motivation, initiative, and performance. Fink discusses the specifics of using Chapter 1 monies more effectively.

Accelerated Instruction

Henry Levin, the founder of Accelerated Instruction, is a professor at Stanford University. A wide variety of materials and newsletters are available through the Accelerated Schools Project at Stanford University in Stanford, California. Hollibrook Accelerated School is a model of the program which is part of the Spring Branch ISD in Houston, Texas as are other schools whose names are available through the Division of Accelerated Instruction at the Texas Education Agency.

Bonstingl, John Jay, *Schools of Quality*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1992.

Phi Delta Kappan, January 1993, journal explores issues of accelerated and total quality schools and provides excellent background knowledge for schools ready to restructure.

This research seeks to respond to three basic questions:

QUESTION I:

When students don't achieve adequately, they are retained. Does retention work? If retention doesn't work, why not?

QUESTION II:

Does remediation of students, retained or promoted, help? What kind of remediation, if any, helps?

QUESTION III:

What helps kids the most? Restructured environments and accelerated instruction

Preface and Introduction

> "While the reform movement of the 1980's elevated the mission of public education–to include high academic aspirations for all students, not merely for the gifted and the privileged–in practice, it has mostly meant tinkering with a fundamentally flawed machine."
>
> *U.S. News and World Report*
> "The Perfect School"
> January 11, 1993

The Context of Reform

Upon the 10th anniversary of the unprecedented educational reform which swept Texas in 1983, Texans continue to examine the long-term effects of landmark initiatives begun at that time (Matlock, 1988, p. 6). Reform focused on the development of essential elements of the curriculum, increased graduation requirements, statewide comprehensive testing, and other changes. As researchers and practitioners alike reflect on the effects of reform on children in at-risk situations, the events of the decade raise vital concerns. After so much time, effort, and expense, equity and excellence remain elusive.

The Long View: Vicious Cycles

It is now accepted that old forms of schooling, expecially for children in at-risk situations, do not serve well the contemporary economic climate; dramatic improvements and a change of direction are needed. "Sometimes you just have to start over..." begins writer Anne Lewis in her commentary on the results of the independent Commission on Chapter 1 (Lewis, 1993, p. 356). Such a sentiment would be confirmed by a recent study in Florida where Florida State University researchers found that students earning the General Educational Development (GED) certificate were more likely to be employed and to earn more money than regular graduates of high school (*Education Weekly*, February 3, 1993, p. 8). How is it possible that earning a high school diploma actually damages the prospects of students not currently attending or planning to attend college?

In order to look forward, we must look back. Over 100 years of history illustrate that reforms overlaid on the same basic schooling paradigm cycle through approximately the same soon-familiar stages: politicians, writers, and industrial managers warn of perceived social and economic danger; citizens and lawmakers issue a call for new standards; this call is answered and implemented in the fashion of past reforms; test results indicate the effort is inadequate, and new warnings of perceived danger are again sounded. These warnings often relate dire consequences for society when the needs of children in at-risk situations go unmet. Indeed, educators have not neglected this critical group of future citizens; but have their efforts been effective?

Why Start Over? What's Wrong?

When comprehensive testing in a school or district indicates the achievement gap is widening instead of closing, what solutions really work to close the gap? If the widened achievement gap seems to dictate the need for alternative types of educational strategies, what types of settings work and why? Do students who remain in essentially the same educational setting for a longer period of time "catch up" to their age-mates? What happens to these students ultimately?

Maybe some other questions need to be asked. Is there something about children in at-risk situations that limits their opportunities to succeed? Alarming statistics abound, but no longer alarm. By the year 2000, 27 percent of all children will live in poverty; 56 percent will live with a poorly educated single mother, and the number of children whose first language is not English will approximate six million (Bempechat and Ginsburg, 1989, p. 36).

Equitably equipping growing numbers of children in poverty for the future is a challenge educators, politicians, and the business community are beginning to see in its full complexity. Teaching children in poverty how to learn, how to think, how to analyze and reflect is not the same type of challenge as teaching children who are broadly advantaged, although even financially advantaged children often struggle. One way to "close the gap" would be to lower expectations for advantaged students, "dummying down" the curriculum and tests so that all would succeed. Such a strategy would endanger, by any measure, the future of all students. Researchers note that there is something about the life experiences of students in at-risk situations which frequently portends failure on standardized measures. Why is that so? Poverty and the stress of poverty dramatically affect the quality of support parents are able to give and how much they can influence educational outcomes (Bempechat, 1992, p. 3). However, it may also be possible that standardized tests simply do not measure what students in at-risk situations tend to know or need to know.

Further, clear evidence suggests that girls in at-risk situations are doubly jeopardized since standardized tests tend to favor male test-takers (AAUW, 1992, p. 54). And since the future of many children in at-risk situations appears to rest, at least in part, on the educational level of their mother, such figures indicate decline indeed (LBJ, 1992, p. 32). Lack of gender equity limits property rights for women; limited access in the past to higher education course work and opportunities has meant that women graduating from high school will earn only about $0.68 for every dollar earned by men in analogous positions (IDRA, February, 1993, p. 5). If the educational system–including access, delivery and evaluation–does not provide equity, what systemic changes would be most likely to help students in at-risk situations measure up to the expectations of the society in which they must one day participate and be employed?

Many teachers, counselors and administrators are not knowledgeable about the strategies available to help direct students in at-risk situations towards productive schooling, employment and lives. Traditional testing schedules, funding patterns, sociological factors, and narrowly based assessment practices all may, ironically, provide an environment in which students in at-risk situations are the least likely to succeed. There is, therefore, a growing interest in using a variety of goals, strategies, and assessment measures in addition to standardized tests to guide and evaluate students in at-risk situations.

Certainly standardized test measures show a significant and increasing gap in achievement nationally (Bempechat, 1992, p. 5). Are the gap-revealing data produced by comprehensive testing a symptom of how the system divides, sorts, and creates inequities, or are they a formative diagnosis of individual student learning needs, creating the possibility for individualization and, hence, excellence? Or are they some combination of both? Or neither?

And what types of guarantees do students have that, once successful, their education will be of enduring value because it taught them how to think, read, listen, speak, and solve problems in a world best described as a technological chameleon?

Purpose of the Research

Gaining a National Perspective Sets the Stage

This issue analysis provides an overview of national research relating to retention, remediation, and accelerated instruction designed to close the achievement gap. Critical documents assessing the reform in Texas are currently available and provide background to this study (Texas Education Agency, 1992, *Impact*). The broader issues of what goals are appropriate for the graduates of the year 2000 and beyond, and what strategies work to close the gap–including retention, remediation, and acceleration–remain topics of urgent discussion, research, and policy concern.

Providing Information Is A Goal of the Commissioner's Critical Issue Analysis Series

Educators desire to break out of vicious cycles of failed reforms by obtaining information about and insight into how to make real and long-term gains on closing the gaps in poverty, unemployment and achievement which currently stratify society in the United States. The purpose of this research is to provide practitioners, consultants, legislators, and the State Board of Education a research-based overview of the issues regarding the gap in achievement between high and low-performing students, and to survey issues of remediation, retention in grade, and accelerated instruction as responses to this gap.

QUESTION I

When students don't achieve adequately, they are retained in the same grade. Does retention work? If retention doesn't work, why not?

Background

A National Overview of the Achievement Gap

While standardized test measurements do not give a complete picture of progress being made by certain populations, they are one of the chief indicators available. In the United States, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), one of the most comprehensive of the assessment programs, provides valuable data on national trends and conditions in student learning.

NAEP reports student growth in basic reading and mathematics skills, but a decline in higher-order skills in both areas. White students made some gains, though not as dramatic as did minority students. Minority students and children attending schools in poverty areas–both urban and rural–have generally improved achievement in the last twenty years, most markedly in reading and mathematics. Increases in minority achievement in basic skills coupled with overall trends toward stable majority achievement have helped close the learning gap slightly between minorities and the overall student population (Linn and Dunbar, 1990, p. 130).

The nature of many of these gains, however, is most disconcerting. Increases appear to be almost entirely attributable to improvement in basic skills with limited improvement in higher-order reading and mathematics skills; the learning gap has not closed in these areas (Linn and Dunbar, 1990, p. 132). Issues of access to course work teaching these skills continues to be a concern for educators and policymakers seeking to close the achievement gap in higher-order thinking, speaking, writing, and listening skills.

Gains in graduation rates have especially eluded Hispanics. According to the Census Bureau, by the age of 17, almost one in five Hispanics has dropped out. This compares with roughly one in 16 African Americans and one in 15 whites by the same age dropping out. By the year 2000, Hispanics will represent about 10 percent of the nation's work force. When assessing the extent of the gap in achievement by graduation rates, researchers find these data most troubling (Kantrowitz, 1991, p. 60).

Texas Presents A Growing Challenge

Texas ranks 43rd in graduation rate among the states and 46th in performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (Texas Education Agency, *Educational Equity*, 1992, pp. 11-12).

The value of the standardized tests given nationally, and especially their effect on students in at-risk situations, continues to be a maelstrom in which Texas plays a vital role. Subpopulations continue to struggle (Cooper, 1992, p. 20). Additional documents that more broadly assess the picture of life for children in at-risk situations in Texas perceive this group's welfare as urgently jeopardized (Iscoe, 1990, pp. 1ff.).

Data confirming the staggering amount of children's suffering in Texas cannot be denied. Out of the 5,300,000 children under 18 in Texas, 1,278,244 were eligible for Medicare and 8,891 were in foster care. Fifty-three thousand six hundred and twenty six were confirmed victims of child abuse or neglect, and half of all of these were under age 6. Texas taxpayers pay nearly $14,000 to incarcerate an inmate for one year, but only an average of $3,500 to educate one student. Texas ranks 43rd in child poverty; 48th in number of mothers receiving early prenatal care; 48th in per capita spending on public mental health and 47th in adult literacy. Texas is first per capita in the nation among births to girls 14 and younger (*Status Report*, 1991, p. iii, ff.).

Further, the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in Texas estimates that there are between 75,000 and 100,000 homeless children. A large number of poor families are also, while not technically homeless, precariously housed. These families tend to be highly mobile, often moving from apartment complex to apartment complex to take advantage of special discounts offered to new renters. Their mobility dramatically effects the schools that try to serve them.

Ninth grade is, apparently, a particularly hazardous time for Texas youth. Studies demonstrate that certain attendance policies, combined with statewide testing, may make many ninth grade students feel hopeless (''Research Briefs,'' Winter, 1991, p. 6). What relationship to these data might the factory-model school system have–a system that was designed to meet the needs primarily of children in two-parent families, with one working parent, not in poverty, stable, and in the dominant language and culture?

"Large-scale, Batch Production"

(Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 5)

Breaking vicious cycles of ineffective reform requires historical reflection on what it is we wanted the education process to do in the past and what we want it to do in the future. Development of the achievement gap in the first place and retention in grade as a form of remediation are embedded in a central assumption or paradigm describing how schooling in the United States occurs. It occurs chiefly by age. Since the 1900's when education became universal and the management of large numbers of students became necessary, there was a need for a tidy, "democratic," and straightforward way to arrange students. Placement by chronological age became the critical factor in organizing entering students. Thus the discrete grade level curriculum for each age of child was developed.

The age-specific model is based on the assumption that knowledge can be broken down into bite-sized pieces, formatted in a book or on worksheets, sequenced, and delivered with a specific age of child-consumer in mind. The pattern of organization chosen is based on a "large scale batch production" factory-like model (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 5).

The Traditional Model Emphasizes Differences

Organized tightly by age, however, students still demonstrate ability differences in each subject, and schools have addressed these differences by ability grouping within each classroom or tracking within the school. Retained students are one of several possible tracks. Since universal schooling began, discrepancies between what students were thought to be able to achieve at a certain age and what they actually achieved before, at, or after the idealized age have sorted children out by groups. There are artificial categories for overage so-called "underachievers," on-level "normal" achievers, and youthful "precocious" learners in these or similar categories.

The Traditional Model Puts Students in At-Risk Situations More at Risk

Swelling numbers of students failing to meet the so-called "standards" set by comprehensive testing sounded a national alarm in the 1970's, and a rash of studies and executive reports dismayed the American public. "Getting tough" and clearly defining expectations for achievement as measured by comprehensive testing at the end of a measured time period seemed to be the solution. Those who responded early to *A Nation at Risk* evidently defined "excellence" as the student's ability to perform certain specific tasks on an examination indicating content "mastery" at certain specific points in the student's chronological age. Goals of the objectives reflect the definition of success prominent in the 1950's and 1960's and necessary for productive employment throughout a discrete time period now past (Daggett, 1993, "Opening Session"). Attaching task performance to a specific chronological age in an attempt to meet discrete performance goals reflects the prevailing conception of education during the frenzied days of watershed reform.

While reform packages implied a certain definition of high standards, neither massive influx of additional funding nor relevant quality-focused paradigms for successful schooling accompanied the demands for more rigorous student performance (Matlock, 1988, p. 13). Even in the so-called "safety net" courses like vocational and technical education, changes did not keep pace with industry flux; gender bias and irrelevance continued to jeopardize those the courses were intended to help (AAUW, 1992, p. 42). Controversy over the effectiveness of additional funding lingered, although recent studies show a direct link between infusion of additional funds and student test scores (Bracey, *Kappan*, March 1993, p. 574). Had injection of massive funding accompanied the reform, it remains a question whether or not the expertise systemically to renew the schools would have been available at that time or is available now. Other concerns include the lack of understanding of the change process in schools and the inability to implement innovative practices.

The Research Details the Effect of Reforms on "Failers"

History demonstrates that cycles of reform yield either greater or fewer numbers of "failers." For example, in the early decades of the 1900's, retention–insofar as data was kept–was a popular consequence of schooling for an accepted proportion of the population. Revolutionary new concepts in the 1960's and 1970's then replaced age-discrete competency "gatekeepers" with other types of evaluation and retentions were at an all-time low in keeping with popular conceptions of a more holistic view of students.

From the late 1970's until the present, the "back to the basics" movement again increased the numbers of overage students. Whereas in 1950 about 6.6 percent of third graders were overage, in 1982, nearly 30 percent of third graders were overage.

proportionately with the relative popularity of minimum competency testing (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 6).

Reform Stillborn for Children in At-Risk Situations

A critical component of House Bill 72 and similar nationwide efforts was the assumption that promotion was to be based primarily on test results. This assumption is still largely supported by public opinion which shares the view that the threat of flunking will inspire students to perform and that "high standards" will ensure the integrity of a high school diploma, leading to further education or productive employment (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 4). As predicted, implementation of this concept of assessment, among other reforms, resulted in delineation of an ever-widening achievement gap, a national increase in grade retentions, and in increased dropping out (Cardenas, 1990, p. 4). The Texas reforms in the 1980's were intended to ensure the success of students in at-risk situations but, in fact, exacerbated an already-questionable fate.

Research Reveals a Rare and Unanimous Voice

Why Would "Flunking" Fail? That's Not Logical

The complex realities of schooling clearly defy simple logic. Why would the results of the research be so confusing? Somehow reality in retention issues, at first blush, appears to defy logic. Doesn't a musician, in striving to polish a piece, return over the same notes repeatedly, practicing until the piece is perfect? If a dentist discovers she cannot properly fill a tooth, she practices on models over and over again. Why wouldn't going back over the same material again for a good, long year yield a better learner? If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Repeating unsuccessful practices ends in an accumulation of frustration. Focus on why certain exercises or endeavors did or did not work leads students to self-evaluation and critique which empowers them as learners. Further, the "performance" model or end-product scrutiny we call test grades assumes that all activities leading up to the taking of the test are themselves valuable only insofar as they do or do not lead to passing the test. Not passing the test falsely indicates the futility of the activities which preceded the evaluation. Non-promotion has traditionally been used as the chief remedy for academic failure and remains today a nearly universal practice. In the musician analogy above, however, it is apparent that the musician perfecting a piece doesn't necessarily repeat the whole piece, but focuses on those parts which were not perfect only. Perhaps we need to re-examine the assumptions upon which the practice of retention is based. These assumptions relate to evaluation of the learning process as well as the education product. Are we evaluating all that went on?

As a direct consequence of having organized children by clearly demarcated ages and grades, educators evaluating whether or not children have produced adequately have next to decide whether or not a child can "leave" a grade and move on to, theoretically, more complex material. If going through one grade signifies the obtaining of certain pieces of knowledge, then not obtaining that knowledge would imply a need to go through the experience again. Does it work?

Apparently the formula is not so straightforward. Social, cultural, academic and conceptual issues blend to blunt the rewards of retention if the complexities of schooling are not taken into account. Simplistic organizational patterns often elicit simplistic solutions which leave many members of the organization disenfranchised.

The Research Reveals A Persistent Bid for Change

Individual studies and meta-analyses (studies compiling and summarizing groups of studies) proliferated in the decade following the 1983 reform. As the reform itself was unfolding in 1984, Johnson and other research analysts predicted that shortsighted public policy could precipitate a situation where "radical surgery is performed to treat the symptom, rather than considering therapy to deal with the problem" (Johnson, 1984, p. 68). Shortly thereafter, the debatable effects of competency-based promotion policies on widening the achievement gap clearly anticipated in Johnson's analogy appeared. What went awry in a reform so sweeping and so well-intended?

The Research Draws Strong Conclusions, Study after Study

(Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 16)

For 70 years, researchers have deliberated the issue of retention. Studies mount and few, if any, contradict the evidence against the practice of retention (Ill. State Board of Education, 1990, p. 2). As early as the 1930's, educators were aware of the damaging effects of retention on the social and psychological development of students. Retention is, several reports note, like punishing a youngster for being sick.

Other studies indicate comparable trends. The 1989 publication of Shepard and Smith's *Flunking Grades: Research and Policies on Retention* expedited emergence into public consciousness of issues related to retention policy (Shepard and Smith,1989) and spawned yet additional quantities of retention/promotion studies.

Following Shepard and Smith, national research centers simultaneously began to critique the burgeoning number of retainees. The Center for Policy Research in Education issued a policy brief in 1990 noting the flurry of studies and the overwhelming nature of the negative effects of retention on graduation rates and debilitation of self-esteem. The troubled tone of the document implies an underlying critique; "...even those children just beginning school are flunking. In some districts, as many as 50 percent of children are asked to repeat kindergarten." The inordinate effects on minority populations, over-representation of the southern states among high numbers of retentions, and that the United States receives "first place" in the world for numbers of students flunking are clear (Center for Policy Research, 1990, p. 1).

By May of 1991, Karweit reported a total amassed count of some 800 studies in retention and promotion, noting that the literature could be divided into about three types of studies: studies which compared the retained students with promoted students; studies which compared retained students before and after retention; and studies which randomly assigned equivalent students to promotion or retention.

Karweit further describes sub-issues which the researchers begin to address, such as transition room placement, developmental kindergartens, partial grade retention, complete grade repetition, and alternative programs, all fitting in one way or another into four types of educational practice: recycling or repeating a grade but receiving no additional resources or special programs; repeating the grade, but receiving additional-year help and special programs; being placed in an additional-year program prior to actual failure, and being failed or promoted in certain subjects only (Karweit, 1991, pp. 2ff.).

Landmark Research Document Recognizes Texas' Role

In 1992, the prestigious Center for Evaluation, Development, and Research (CEDR) of Phi Delta Kappa published *Retention in Grade: Looking for Alternatives* which summarizes seminal pieces of retention research, discusses who is retained, explores various views on retention, and probes policy implications (CEDR, 1992, pp. xi.ff.). The Phi Delta Kappa study is now a centerpiece in all retention discussions.

In the executive summary to this landmark document, this most recent of the major publications on the issue of retention recognizes the Texas State Board of Education for providing national leadership in retention issues when it barred school districts from retaining pupils in prekindergarten and kindergarten (CEDR, 1992, "Executive Summary"). Three months after the publication of *Retention in Grade*, the Texas State Board reconsidered its decision and allowed students, with parental permission, to be retained in prekindergarten and kindergarten or in transitional kindergartens; policymakers also adopted a companion rule allowing for mixed-age and heterogeneous groupings as an alternative to retention and transitional classes (Wortham and Patton, 1992, p. 77).

What Does "Ready to Learn" Mean? Issues of Equity and Access Ensue

In his national agenda for education reform, former President Bush declared that by the year 2000, "all children will come to school ready to learn." Widespread debate has ensued regarding the definition of "readiness." The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states that several issues are embedded in the assumptions of the "ready to learn" statement.

First, early childhood specialists recognize that children's backgrounds vary immensely; some children come to school with numerous skills in place which the majority of society members may recognize as signs of "readiness." Other children, however cognitively capable, do not have the background or experience yet in developing these skills. There is another way to conceptualize "ready to learn;" that is, all children–perhaps even prenatally–are ready to learn. Educators must be ready to use in their teaching process that which children already know. Holding children back from entering school until "ready" is a form of cultural discrimination and tracking. The NAEYC finds holding children out of school reprehensible (NAEYC, 1990, pp. 1-2). Instead the organization recommends use of age as the primary criterion for *entry* into school.

Second, who is responsible for getting children ready? Clearly, the assumption that children will come ready to learn is that it is not the school which is responsible for getting children ready; this assumption the NAEYC challenges. "NAEYC believes it is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of children as they enter and to provide whatever services are needed in the least restrictive environment" (NAEYC , 1990, p. 1, italics theirs). Researchers in the Phi Delta Kappa study, *Growing Up Is Risky Business and Schools are Not to Blame* (1992) focus accountability on students as facilitated by teachers. That is, schools are responsible to help students learn to be responsible for their own learning. Prior to the time when learning formally begins, at age 3 or 4, the responsibility would–in such a logic–fall to parents. If the parents are unable to negotiate the responsibility, Kappan writers suggest teachers attempt to be understanding first, caring second, nurturing of this sense of responsibility third, and finally, emphasizing academic achievement (Frymier, 1992, pp. 74-76).

Finally, whether or not a child is "ready to learn" must center around what it is the child is supposed to be learning. Singular emphases placed on academic standards for the early grades often lead to ability grouping and tracking as soon as schooling begins. These expectations should be replaced with more appropriate expectations of children so that they may remain heterogeneously grouped and not categorized in any way as they enter the world of learning (NAEYC, 1990, pp. 1-2) with the possible exception of gifted students, as noted below.

The debate about "readiness" or what is developmentally appropriate for students ranges over a wide variety of topics and branches into two main streams of literature: one approach in which students are conceptualized as "ready" to learn certain discrete items of content at certain discrete ages typified by Grant, Dobson, et. al, and another approach which admonishes that "readiness" is a term fraught with cultural baggage that must be sorted and debunked. This research is typified by Ogbu, Moll, and others. Much of the debate centers around how tied the academic learning of the students is or should be to the real world, and the freight of the research would tend to point to the value of conceptualizing learning as having a social character as much as an academic character. Building curriculum on what students already know ("funds of knowledge") would implicitly value the cultural context most familiar to many children, and ignoring this context tends to create irrelevance for populations attempting to learn and grow in situations made more risk-laden by an insistence on a unilateral or single "standard" approach to knowledge (Moll, p. 21).

Saying that knowledge can be derived from a variety of sources, cultures, and contexts is distinct from the notion that children don't need certain tools of literacy and numeracy to become enfranchised in the society. Children's environments should be rich in language, story, objects to stack, sort, count, and cuddle; i.e., "developmentally appropriate" should not become synonymous with a type of deprivation (McGill-Franzen, p. 57). A preschool room in which the cultural "fund of knowledge" is used to tell stories, write stories, develop trading systems, exhibit means of transportation, or handle any other activity is one rich in use of the tools that will help children read–possibly in a variety of languages–when they are ready. Withholding literacy and numeracy under the guise of "developmental readiness" concepts lamentably limits access to school success for children in at-risk situations.

The Research Points to Trends, Not Guidelines for Individual Students

For whatever reason students are overage when they enter kindergarten or first grade–whether through "redshirting" or "tracking," educators need to be aware of the consequences. No body of research can cover every exigency; neither can the unique and individual cases of each child be highlighted in the preponderant freight of research statistics. Parents, teachers, and administrators, however, must keep in mind that only the research tells the *long-term* picture. The "transitional kindergarten" controversy points to the difficulty of attempting to make decisions that will provide excellence and equity for hundreds of immensely diverse school districts and thousands of different students, some of whom take longer to learn and some of whom are gifted.

Similarly, readers must keep in mind that what may be excellent policy for one group of children in at-risk situations may jeopardize the progress of another. While tracking and ability grouping are generally pernicious practices for most students because of the remedial nature of the instruction provided, heterogeneous grouping adversely affects one of the minorities schools are seeking to serve better–gifted minorities, including culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students who are often overlooked (NRCGT, 1991, "Executive Summary").

The Research Amasses to Hundreds of Studies

To date, literally hundreds of studies exist examining the affects of retention on the literally millions of retained students produced by the "educational excellence" movement of the 1980's. What is so exceptional about the body of literature is not the number of studies, the scope, size or longevity of the data, but rather its uniform conclusion. Undoubtedly no other topic of educational research has generated a conclusion so unanimous as that generated by this burgeoning body of evidence.

While tracking and ability grouping are generally pernicious practices for most students because of the remedial nature of the instruction provided, heterogeneous grouping adversely affects one of the minorities schools are seeking to serve better–gifted minorities. . .

Why Doesn't Grade Retention Work?

The Research Challenges Assumptions and Realities of Gradedness

Attaching the mastery of certain specific competencies like the essential elements to a specific age of the student in a *graded-school format* may imply certain assumptions:

- all students possess the requisite ability to be successful in school,
- the differences between successive grade levels are quite large,
- the curriculum is appropriate for all students, and
- when a pupil does not master the curriculum, it is the pupil who must be held accountable (CEDR, 1992, p. 3).

Seldom does a discussion regarding an individual student's promotion/retention decision recognize the wide range of achievement that already exists at each grade level or varieties of sophistication across subjects for each student. Further confounding the attempt to tie age to achievement are special populations such as mainstreamed special education students, students limited in English proficiency, gifted learners, and students who are at risk for a variety of reasons.

Wide variations in ability within one class in one grade are routinely addressed by the best teachers who modify the curriculum and their teaching style to meet varying needs. For example, students' reading abilities in grade 3 may vary widely from grade 1 to grade 5 levels. A student promoted to grade 3 may have grade 2 reading ability and grade 5 mathematics ability. Individual students have intrapersonal discrepancies such as grade 2 reading ability and grade 5 mathematics ability. Different learning styles also typify each student and classroom. For this reason, it is accepted practice that teachers must use a wide variety of teaching styles, materials, and approaches to facilitate learning among a wide variety of students.

Because students of the same age vary so widely in their ability to perform the tasks usually assigned, the traditional perception of students learning in like-age cohort groups is a *misperception*. This is particularly apparent when considering what would happen to students in the slowest-functioning group if policy dictated promotion strictly on mastery basis and no changes were made in the nature, delivery, or style of curriculum. After two years in school, students in the lowest 16 percent of all students are achieving only at the level of the average student at the end of first grade; after four years, they achieve at the level of the average student at the end of grade 2, and so on until, after attending classes for 12 years, they reach the achievement level the average student attained at sixth grade (CEDR, 1992, p. 18).

To avoid extremely overage students, most districts or states have stipulated that no more than two retentions may occur within a specified period of time, such as the elementary years, kindergarten through grade 8, etc. Clearly, the overlap in achievement across grade levels is very pronounced and demonstrates how the differences between grade levels are small in comparison to the differences within grade levels. Further, research reveals that the extent of the differences grows as the students age until, for example, sixth grade when the average class contains *approximately an eight-year range* in achievement in reading and mathematics (CEDR, 1992, p. 24).

Being Overage Contributes to Lower Achievement and Dropping Out

C. Thomas Holmes, in his meta-analysis in 1984 of 63 studies, found conclusions consistent with other research: on average, retained children are worse off than their promoted counterparts on both personal adjustment and academic outcomes (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 27). Grissom and Shepard assert that retention dramatically increases the likelihood of dropping out, rather than performing as an effective intervention to prevent it. Holmes also notes that because the public confuses high numbers of retentions with academic integrity, retention research has maintained a significant level of interest throughout the 1970's and '80's, generating about 20 large scale studies a decade (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 16).

In a Chicago study, researchers note that, after passage in 1980 of a stringent eighth-grade promotion policy, the class of 1981 had a large cadre of retained students. Longitudinal data about the retained students demonstrated that being overage was more of a predictor of dropping out than was underachievement. Similar studies in California and Texas consistently indicate that repeating a grade does not improve opportunities for academic achievement. For example, one study concluded that for African American males in Austin, Texas, being overage by one year increases the chances of dropping out by 27 percent. White females being overage one year, even those in a high socioeconomic status, demonstrated 21 percent greater tendencies to drop out than did their at-age peers (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 60).

. . . retained children are worse off than their promoted counterparts on both personal adjustment and academic outcomes. . .

In a 1989 study of 22,018 students, 25-35 of whom were considered to be "at risk" according to his definition, Frymier concludes, "Retention in grade is clearly harmful. Research verifies that point: the probability of dropping out of school is increased, and the likelihood of raising achievement levels is diminished by retention. If professionals believe that retention is helpful–and nearly half of the teachers (48 percent) and slightly more than one-fourth of the principals (25 percent) do–then educators seem not to be bound by the ethical principle that is described in medicine as 'first do no harm'"(CEDR, 1992, p. 91).

Longitudinal Benefits of Retention in Kindergarten Remain Doubtful

Much emotional debate focuses on the transitions surrounding entry into kindergarten and first grade. In a study of kindergartners in a Colorado school district, Shepard and Smith asked two simple questions: 1) Were the children more successful academically after an extra year of school? and 2) Did they feel better about themselves because they were not pushed ahead before they were ready? (CEDR, 1992, p. 64). The carefully controlled study of 40 matched pairs of promoted and non-promoted children in at-risk situations examined multiple criteria such as standardized test score measurements, normative teacher judgments, and parent information.

The only advantage for the retained students was a one-month net gain in reading achievement; mathematics scores showed a net loss for retained students. Other variables showed essentially no differences between the two groups. While teachers did not notice negative effects on students' attitudes, parents did (CEDR, 1992, p. 72). The study concludes, "Thus, the belief that extra-year programs will give children in at-risk situations a boost, in academic achievement or self-concept, has not been borne out by empirical research" (CEDR, 1992, p. 74). The net result of the well-intended reforms that have led to a discretely-graded competency model which merely increases academic demands in a traditional school environment, while intended to teach more, has actually resulted in children learning less (CPRE, 1990, p. 3).

Ironically, parents and educators wishing to give young children the "gift of time" may be contributing unwittingly to underachievement. In a recent study of over 24,000 students, the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (National Center for Education Statistics, NELS:88), concluded, "Those retained in the early grades spent more time in remedial classes; had lower grades; had lower achievement scores in reading, math, and science; felt less control over their lives; and had lower self-concepts than did the matched group of non-retainees" (George, *Beyond Retention*, 1991, p. 5). Whatever name is given to extra-year programs, research indicates that they are defacto retentions and suffer from the same long-term consequences as all other retentions.

High Retention Rates May Nurture the Idea that Schools Are Not Responsible for Student Success

Finally, although this is not the case in Texas, many school districts nationwide do not have to include the test scores of retained students. These low scores they may wish to eliminate from the district's mandated report to raise their averages (CEDR, 1992, p. 87). Retentions occur for a plethora of reasons outside the stated reason of non-achievement; however, the basic inference of non-promotion forces the responsibility of failure, some researchers contend, back on the student and allows the district to escape accountability for student success (CEDR, 1992, p. 126).

Why Does the Practice of Retention Persist?

> *A better mousetrap? "The key idea is not to invent a better way to kill mice effectively, but to discover a way to not have mice around in the first place."*
>
> John Jay Bonstingl
> *The Quality School* (1992)

Retention is Thought to Increase Achievement

Retention of students persists despite the research for a number of reasons. Teachers, for one, may see a retained student appear to improve the following year. Some teachers even boast that retained students later become leaders (Far West Laboratory, 1989, p. 3). Teachers, however, do not have the benefit of longitudinal studies and so do not see the effects of leveling or deteriorating performance two or three years down the road. They may not even know the student they intended to help has dropped out.

In addition, many teachers are simply not aware of the research indicating the ominous effects of retention on most retained students. And there is no fiscal incentive to find alternative ways to remediate students since those who make the decision to retain, usually the principal and the teacher along with the parents, do not bear the fiscal costs of the retention–the district and the state do.

Being Retained Does Not Motivate Students to Hard Work But Does Affect Self-Esteem

One of the reasons educators offer to support retention implies that students promoted despite non-achievement will lose their motivation. If they are routinely 'passed along,' why should they work hard to pass? While some advocate grade retention based on the belief that pupils will be seriously and emotionally harmed by "unearned" promotions, "social promotion" was thought to devalue the integrity of the credential earned from the institution. What does the research indicate?

. . . students have ranked grade retention as the third most feared life experience, behind blindness and the death of a parent.

Again, with near unanimity, researchers find that student motivation suffers greatly from non-promotion. In a recent study, 87 percent of first graders interviewed reported feeling "embarrassed," "sad," "upset," or "bad" about the idea of spending extra time in the early grades. Parents also report negative consequences to retention. Parents of kindergartners retained report poorer attitudes toward school than equivalent groups of children in at-risk situations (CEDR, 1992, p. 73).

While a 1985 study of a "junior first grade" program concludes few harmful effects on participants in the program, the results of this idiosyncratic finding are unclear for a number of reasons. Were the participants exhibiting "customer satisfaction"? Did the individuals offer what they considered to be socially acceptable responses? While Sandoval and Fitzgerald do not report strong negative effects for the junior first grade program, they support the majority of the research by suggesting that positive attitudes toward the program they examined may be exhibited because it is viewed as distinct from non-promotion, which is assumed to have a stigmatizing effect (CEDR, 1992, p. 85).

Several findings are ambiguous on the issue of impact on self-esteem. While Holmes and Matthews conclude that the potential for negative effects "consistently outweighs the positive," (CEDR, 1992, p. 51) other investigations reveal variation in effect according to the students' grade level. Students retained in fifth and sixth grades seem to suffer emotionally more than students retained in junior highs. Most researchers, however, maintain the clear refrain that retention is indeed an emotional watershed for students. Nationwide, researchers are discovering both short and long-term negative consequences to early retention, suggesting that early retention is an educational fad based on premises out of sync with basic principles of child development.

For example, children in preschool may be able to add and subtract using blocks or beads, but will fail at the same problem presented in flash card format (CPRE, 1990, p. 3). Has such a child mastered adding and subtracting? Should they be retained if they cannot respond to the flash card format? Does their ability to respond to one format only make them a failure? Psychologists dub retention-related stresses "failure syndrome." Yamamoto's conclusions about the emotional effects of retention remain salient over time; students have ranked grade retention as the third most feared life experience, behind blindness and the death of a parent (Cardenas, 1990, p. 2).

Retaining Students is Thought to Reflect A School's High Standards

In keeping with the notion that high rates of retention indicate "high standards," some people believe that such standards must be maintained even if they impose educational and personal hardships on many children (CEDR, 1992, p. 217). Ironically, the "standards" argument is based, as is so much of the traditional school model, on a factory paradigm where workers are "adequate" if they have some mechanical knowledge–if they can hammer a heel on a shoe so it stays, if they can arrange hair so it fluffs, if they can listen to the faucet and hear how it should be fixed.

Non-academic Agendas Support Retention

While the rationale behind promotion only upon mastery of certain minimum competencies, often called "gatekeeping," is based on mastery of academic goals, other reasons may, in fact, decide retention for individual students. Teacher judgments are among the most critical (CEDR, 1992, p. 87). Teacher judgment may include student popularity (CEDR, 1992, p. 85), teacher tests, and intuitions about a student's future (CEDR, 1992, p. 2).

Students may also be retained at other critical points on their journey through school. One such point is between kindergarten and first grade, a special year often called "transition kindergartens." Parents and administrators may hold children out of first grade because of their birthdate, size, or because they hope these children will later be identified as "gifted." The practice, known in the literature as "yuppie redshirting," (Wortham and Patton, 1992, p. 76) may demonstrate an idiosyncratic set of dynamics in the transitional kindergartens of affluent schools, and much research does not differentiate for socioeconomic status of "transitional" kindergartens to ascertain if, in fact, they are a form of tracking. Clearly, defining the intent of "yuppie redshirting" and its long-term effects would require further research.

Practice and Research Pass Like Ships In the Night at Mythical ISD

In an intriguing snapshot of a mythical district determined to raise academic standards by stringently setting promotional gate policies based on criterion-referenced tests, Shepard and Smith report several issues emerge. Multiple and sometimes conflicting interests pressure decisions regarding the setting of cut scores. Fiscal pressures result from various scenarios of individual students having to retake parts or all of the curriculum being tested again. Concerns about how to remediate certain subgroups are voiced and administrators bemoan finding additional rooms, monies, and time for remediation. Disproportionate percentages of ethnic minorities fall below the cut score, raising issues of equity and polarizing parts of the community.

Ironically, after much deliberation, publicity, and stress, over 50 percent of the children eligible for retention are nevertheless promoted. Reference is made to a "larger agenda" which, in practice, dictates promotion and retention on much murkier grounds than would have the district's reputed primary reliance on test scores, however misguided (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 169).

Fiscal Implications

The fiscal implications of retention inevitably surface in the research. Renowned educator David Berliner estimates that in Arizona alone during the course of one year, retentions cost the state about $45 million (Berliner, 1992, p. 3). In California, research indicates that transitional programs in *kindergarten* alone cost the state $84 million (George, 1993, "Interview"). Conservative estimates of the cost of retentions in Texas place the figure at about $1 billion a year (Cardenas, 1990 and 1991).

Concluding Remarks

What is the purpose of schooling in America and in Texas? What might we do if we find a group of children–children of poverty, for example–who consistently are left behind by reform initiatives such as standardized testing and remedial programs, the efforts designed to help them? How might we respond when these children evince some distinctly unstandardized characteristics (CEDR, 1992, p. 218)? If the shoe doesn't fit, do we change the shape of the child's foot? Do we decide the child doesn't need shoes? Should we remake the shoe? What is the best way to create a shoe that not only fits but brings delight?

QUESTION II

Does remediation of students, retained or promoted, help? What kind of remediation, if any, helps close the gap?

Remediation Is Intended to Support Children in At-Risk Situations

The school "is a system that runs efficiently and honestly and that costs the educational lives of most of its people."
(Fine, 1991, p. 8)

Beginning in the mid-1960's, the federal government created a series of categorical grant programs designed to address the special needs of specific students. One of these programs, commonly known as Chapter 1, targets students in at-risk situations and seeks to remove the obstacles to learning these students face. Funding of this massive effort has certainly raised awareness of the special conditions and needs of these students, many of which were barely recognized by the public as existing prior to this legislation (NCAS, 1991, p. 359).

Funds for eligible students supplement the present level of services and are specifically and exclusively for those identified. The directive nature of these grants is designed to ensure that funds will indeed benefit those most in need, and, undoubtedly, without such binding legislation, funds might not always reach the targeted group.

Chapter 1 Programs Miss the Mark

One unanticipated result of this targeted funding, however, is that pullout Chapter 1 programs have increased the isolation of children in at-risk situations, becoming a defacto tracking mechanism. Fragmentation of their curriculum, in addition to the isolation, may cause many students to miss major or significant portions of the regular curriculum, decreasing access to college entrance requirements and building the case for heterogeneous grouping (Gray, 1988, pp. 1-3). Indeed, the deleterious effects of tracking on lower achieving students in Chapter 1 and other programs compose a major theme throughout contemporary education literature (see George, Oakes, Wheelock).

The effectiveness of traditional Chapter 1 programs has been further moderated by a perception that appropriate instruction for students who have not mastered certain subjects will provide increasingly and incrementally smaller, more discrete bits of information. This "watered down" curriculum has become known as "skill-drill-kill," and undoubtedly accounts for improvements in national achievement in skill levels while lower scores in higher order thinking skills among targeted groups prevail (NCAS, 1991, p. 147).

Further, the damaging effects of difficulties articulating Chapter 1 instruction with regular instruction as well as labelling continue to be a source of concern, leading to increased use of in-class models. Within the classroom, aides can work alongside regular teachers to enrich the instruction of identified students. Yet even this strategy, researchers suggest, yields limited gains (Slavin and Madden, 1989, p. 5).

The summary of the Commission on Chapter 1 published in the "Forum" of *Education Week*, January 13, 1993 is perhaps the most helpful, specific, and salient critique of Chapter 1 programs to date. Components of successful programs include 1) clear, high standards for all children regardless of poverty level, 2) new systems to assess progress toward standards, 3) ongoing parent information about students' progress and how they can help, 4) heavy investment in teachers, principals, and other adults in the school, 5) a match of funding to need to assure equity, 6) replacing accounting for dollars with accounting for results, 7) integrate health and social service support, and 8) reward schools that progress and change those that don't (*Education Week*, 1993, p. 46).

Overcoming Funding Structures Increases Access

Funding structures have made it difficult for schools to provide the best instruction to Chapter 1 students. Ironically the same rules which were designed to ensure that extra benefits resulting from designated monies would go to those most in need have undermined many innovations. Changes many Chapter 1 instructors wish to make include cooperative learning groups, heterogeneous grouping, and tutorials in computer-aided instruction.

Researchers note that restricted opportunities and myopic focus on skills for children in at-risk situations begin as early as the elementary grades. Evidence mounts that students either ability tracked or tracked by class assignment tend to spend less time on task and receive less teacher attention than students in higher ability groups (School of Public Affairs, 1992, p. 57). Assignment to a reading ability group tends to be the first step in a long sorting process that begins early and increases in intensity throughout the years of school.

Oakes also notes that information varies in type, with more sophisticated, conceptual materials being discussed in higher ability groups. Preparation for standardized, college-entrance examinations also occurs in higher ability groups. Further, the type of learning most often associated with remedial instruction tends to be passive, discouraging higher order thinking skills (School of Public Affairs, 1992, p. 58). Levin's observations and research have verified what can be seen in hundreds of schools where Chapter 1 students labor: ". . . the approach further hampers the ability of low achieving students to develop thinking skills, lowers their learning expectations, and stigmatizes them as inferior" (*Clearinghouse*, 1991, p. 1).

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Receives Mixed Reviews

Recent evaluations of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) reveal that the program succeeded in raising adult women's and men's average earnings, but the program's success with students in at-risk situations is unclear. *The National JTPA Study: Title II-A Impacts on Earnings and Employment at 18 Months* shows a net loss in earnings for out-of-school youth ages 16-21. Enrollment in the JTPA program brought males a net loss of $854, while it brought a net loss of $182 for women.

While a signal for concern and indicative of the need for further research, these data do not necessarily mean that the program is failing. The drop in income could be, analysts suggest, a logical consequence of decreased work hours while in the program. The report further notes that, while reviews of the work program are mixed, individuals who received training in occupational skills saw their earnings drop at first, but rise later. Job search assistance also apparently yields consistently good results (JTPA, *McRel* "Research Roundup," January 1993). Finally, JTPA programs have been shown to motivate some students in at-risk situations, continuing learning over the summer months when much is often forgotten as well as decreasing underemployment among adults (Texas Dept. of Commerce, 1992, pp. 3-18).

Students in At-Risk Situations Are Often Taught by the Least Educated and Less Experienced Teachers

Perhaps most damaging to remedial students is that their teachers tend to be the least experienced, least educated, and least capable facilitators of learning to address the needs of the students most severely at risk (School of Public Affairs, 1992, p. 58). A cursory look at the typical hierarchy of faculty positions in most school districts indicates that the more experienced, longer-tenured instructors usually teach the electives or the gifted students; vacancies usually appear in classes with students in at-risk situations as teachers either leave the profession entirely or move "up" the hierarchy to teach students perceived as easier, more fulfilling, or less recalcitrant to teach.

In Texas, this is particularly true as teacher shortages continue. A report in the January 1993, issue of "Policy Research" indicates the critical need for teachers entering the profession to be effective with diverse student bodies ("Policy Research," January 1993, p. 7). Districts closest to colleges offering graduate degrees in education as well as districts with few students categorized as economically disadvantaged employ more teachers with graduate degrees. Concomitantly, extreme poverty and extreme wealth effect teacher experience and turnover. The average years of experience in the teaching force in the poorest districts number below the state average; higher percentages of teachers with zero years of experience and higher rates of turnover occur among the poorest districts. Turnover dramatically and adversely effects those students most in need of excellent instruction. In the wealthiest districts, teacher experience is higher; fewer teachers have zero years of experience, and turnover is lower. For the greatest number of districts in the state, however, no clear relationship exists between district wealth and the experience and tenure of the teaching staff ("Policy Research," January 1993, p. 10).

Guidelines to an Interim Solution: What Works Best in the Traditional Model

An Ounce of Prevention is Priceless

One of the troublesome realities of serving children in at-risk situations is that difficulties often predate identification. Prevention, including early intervention, would appear to be superior strategies for closing the gap. One administrator writes, "If schools are supposed to provide for positive learning experiences and curriculum mastery, why are millions of dollars in support funds withheld until students demonstrate failure? If categorical funds are designed to provide for equitable treatment of student differences, why are the resulting services often compartmentalized and fragmented, leading to inequitable solutions?" (Fink, 1992, p. 42).

Try Not to Need a Mousetrap

In early experiments with uses of categorical funding applied as "blended" delivery of programs, palpable success has been made. Managers note that maintenance of federal "time and effort" records is extremely labor intensive and counter-productive; however, the resulting integrated model of services delivered has significantly raised achievement scores through such innovations as within-grade, cross-grade, multi-age, and in-class services. These experiments do not aim to eliminate "pull-out" programs, but to provide teachers with maximum flexibility (Fink, 1992, p. 43).

Pulling Kids Out Pulls Kids Down

Overall, there can be no better advice than generally to avoid pullout instruction for students in at-risk situations and consistently to provide a curriculum "as rich and balanced as that provided high achieving students" (Gray, 1988, p. 2). A word of caution, however, is in order. Appropriate "grouping" patterns are no more of a magic bullet than are banks of computers, universal training in "ropes" challenge, a calculator for every child, or any other panacea so proclaimed. Grouping should be a function of appropriate instruction.

Gifted Underachievers

For a variety of students in at-risk situations, 2-5 percent of whom are gifted underachievers, appropriate grouping is of particular concern. The effects of heterogeneous grouping on gifted students, many of whom are in at-risk situations of more than one type, are a source of ongoing research and concern and two schools of thought coexist.

On the one hand, under-identification of gifted students in at-risk situations continues unabated and ongoing teacher training in effectively identifying this group is critical (Frasier, 1990, p.1). For the sake of those who have been identified, it would be a wholesale misinterpretation of the research to dismiss patterns of homogeneous grouping for gifted students in at-risk situations and for other gifted students for whom this grouping for part or much of the day has demonstrated superior outcomes (Kulik, 1992, pp. v-8 and Johnson and Johnson, undated, pp. 277 ff.). There are times when gifted students should be homogeneously grouped, for either individual instruction, counseling, or for collaboration and competition with their gifted peers.

On the other hand, it would be a wholesale misinterpretation of the research to maintain large homogeneous groups of learners who are not accurately identified as gifted, but are more appropriately categorized as advantaged learners or academically capable learners. Gifted populations should be demographically representative.

At least two simultaneous shortcomings appear to be at play: 1) tracking for students in at-risk situations has minimalized their performance while 2) massive under-identification of gifted students in at-risk situations persists. Wholesale heterogeneous grouping, i.e., elimination of homogeneous grouping for gifted students, will not remedy these shortcomings, but will exacerbate them. Again, ungraded schools often meet the unique needs of gifted students as do magnet schools, clusters within heterogeneous groups, and other acceleration-based options (Rogers, 1992, p. 4).

Many of the needs of gifted students can best be met in a heterogeneous format (Johnson and Johnson, undated, p. 128). Determination of grouping practices should vary according to the goal of the instruction, the amount of adjustments being made in the pacing, compactness and delivery of the curriculum for that particular course, project, or program (Kulik, 1992, pp. v-8). A variety of strategies must be developed, researched, and evaluated to solidify gains with poor, underachieving, minority, and second-language gifted students in at-risk situations.

What appears to be a "grouping dilemma" regarding meeting the needs of both gifted students and others may well be addressed in the burgeoning public school Montessori literature and movement. Dr. Betsy Coe, President of the American Montessori Society, notes that for decades, both within the private and increasingly within the public school context, a variety of grouping strategies have appropriately met the needs of gifted and regular students. "Naturally," Coe notes, "grouping is determined by what the guide (teacher) is trying to accomplish. Gifted students are supportive in their instructional roles, not directive. Giving help is a natural response in a learning community, not a forced thing" (Coe, 1993). *Extensive* teacher preparation and professional development, long periods of mentoring, and experienced supervision accompany teachers' attempts to learn how effectively to group and educate a wide variety of students functioning in the same classroom.

What Works

In their meta-analysis, "What Works for Students at Risk: A Research Synthesis," Slavin and Madden give some specific as well as general characteristics of programs that work to close the achievement gap. Consistent with other findings, they also note, "Both pullouts and in-class models are probably too limited a change in instructional strategy to make much of a difference" (Slavin and Madden, 1989, p. 6).

The comprehensive approach the research recommends:

- accepts responsibility for student success;
- recognizes that success for each student will require additional resources;
- emphasizes prevention;
- emphasizes ongoing classroom change processes; and
- employs remedial programs as a last resort if at all (Slavin and Madden, 1989, p. 7).

While the consensus of the literature is that promotion with remediation is far superior to retention without or even with remediation, all of these options fall short of the appropriate remedy for children in at-risk situations—excellent instruction.

Actual reconceptualization and systemic change takes a long time, and where remediation must occur, certain practices appear to be more effective than others. Slavin and Madden note that programs such as Astra's Magic Math, a kindergarten math readiness program; PLAY, a diagnostic/prescriptive direct instruction program designed to improve young children's motor/cognitive skills; Reading Recovery; U-SAIL, a grades 1-9 program for reading and math; and other programs have been shown to have significant effects on student achievement. Many of these successful strategies combine the characteristics that researchers have identified as the best elements of school design–cross-age tutoring, continuous progress, small group instruction, and cooperative learning. But because very few of these remediation strategies have a longitudinal research component, it is difficult to say how long the positive effects of the efforts will last.

Rethinking Schools: Speeding Up

Not surprisingly, however, the authors conclude, "One of the most effective ways to reduce the number of children who will ultimately need remedial services is to provide the best possible classroom instruction in the first place. Teachers should use instructional methods with a demonstrated capacity to accelerate student achievement, especially that of students at risk" (Slavin and Madden, 1989, p. 9). Teachers are also finding accelerated learning environments featuring cooperative learning, mutual support, and practical applications less gender biased than traditional modes of instruction (Bempechat, 1992, p. 7).

Rethinking Schools: Creating Relevance

It will do students in at-risk situations absolutely no good to have their education speeded up, intensified, lengthened, technologized, site-based, supported by physical and mental health professionals, and broad-based assessed if the content of the curriculum is irrelevant to the world of work. Students in such a system will become unemployed young people. At the same time that concerted efforts are being made by schools, communities, and businesses to address the needs of students in at-risk situations, systemic change must include hard looks at the courses offered, the way technology is used, the demands being placed on job seekers, and ways that schools can ensure that students in at-risk situations can meet the growing demands of an ever-shifting work world.

Extend the Day or Year?

> *"We have met the enemy and they are hours."*
> (Sommerfeld, *Education Week*, March, 1993, p. 15)

For many reasons, advocacy of the extended school day, the extended school year, and year-round school as credible solutions to serving the needs of students in at-risk situations deserves further study. After-school and summer programs have shown remarkable results. More time spent, however, does not necessarily mean higher achievement. Cross-national studies have strongly verified that effective instruction does not always take longer and longer periods of time. What counts is quality. Researchers urge policymakers to examine the use of summer and extended day/year or year-round programs which, given a restructured environment, certainly produce results (Bempechat, 1992, p. 30).

Replace the Latchkey?

Recent research indicates that nationwide up to 10 million children are latchkey kids (Willwerth, *Time*, March 1, 1993); over 1 million of those live in Texas (Texas Department of Commerce estimate). Although volunteer-run telephone hotlines have proven to be tremendously comforting and even life-saving to latchkey kids, children in at-risk situations benefit even more from school-and work-sponsored regular and summer latchkey programs. Researchers point out that children in poverty are often behind even as they begin school because the lack of resources, single parent status, and lack of adequate afterschool care jeopardize their abilities to perform homework tasks and interact socially with neighbors. Clearly, preschool, extended day, and summer programs can successfully moderate some of the effects of poverty (ERIC Search, 1991, p. 18).

Supply a Mentor?

In the growing body of literature which suggests that mentors may be beneficial to students in at-risk populations, researchers have been analyzing the effects of various mentoring models and approaches to students. Mentoring may consist of friendship, collegiality, instruction, advocacy, coaching, pseudo-parenting, and more (Flaxman, Ascher, and Harrington, 1988, p. 1). Successful mentoring will open doors to new worlds such as additional schooling or a new job; it may also help the student or "mentee" to overcome a personal hardship, avoid a pitfall, change the troubling circumstances of his or her life, learn personal problem-solving, or do any number of tasks involved with "the realization of the dream" (Flaxman, Ascher, and Harrington, 1988, p. 4).

From the mentoring literature emerges numerous studies of "resilient" or "tenacious" youth who may not fit any of the various categories of students often served by mentoring programs. "Successful tenacious youth" choose the "precarious solution of acting as if they are participating in some action by improvising the required behavior and taking on the characteristics of whomever can help them, . . .though the motive is not part of the self" (Flaxman, Ascher, Harrington, 1988, p. 38). These youth, though they may not be considered "at risk" by strict school definitions, or "gifted," or meet strict criteria for special services, are emotionally isolated and in need of identity clarification. Mentoring programs appear to be especially helpful to this population, many of whom are female (Flaxman, Ascher, Harrington, 1988, p. 37).

Carefully prepared mentoring programs in the context of real access to educational and economic opportunity are lifesavers for some students in at-risk situations. It is recommended that they occur between an older person and a younger person where the older person is not a great social distance away from the younger. Mentees often are able to meet modest targeted goals met earlier by their mentors. As add-on's to a fragmented, patchwork, or superficially restructured program, however, mentor programs may be heavily critiqued if they serve to label further students or to support false hope for "realization of a dream" found later to be illusive. Finally, mentor programs are doomed to flounder used as a substitute for caring and knowledgeable adults (Flaxman, Ascher, Harrington , 1988, p. 45).

Add-on Instructional Strategies That Appear to Pay Off

Some researchers show behaviorally focused mastery learning to be effective with children in at-risk situations, as is direct instruction that involves demonstration by the teacher, guided practice, and corrective feedback. Frequent monitoring and assessment, high expectations, and performance-based feedback (Bempechat, 1992, p. 34) have been shown to improve achievement. Mastery learning, however, is being heavily critiqued by those who feel that it minimizes the internal control that students in at-risk situations need and that, by driving the system with outcomes or "outputs," we are lowering the quality of the product for a superficial goal few students in at-risk situations share (Holt, 1993, p. 383). This critique is discussed in greater detail below.

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Consistent with the principles of restructured environments, total quality models, and accelerated instruction, students exposed to more challenging standards are more likely to attend class and do well in school than students exposed to less challenging materials, regardless of teacher support and warmth (Bempechat, 1992, p. 34).

Researchers do not agree on the relative importance of avoiding negative feedback and providing positive feedback in obtaining achievement gains. Some studies indicate a positive correlation between supportive feedback and achievement; others warn that "success only" models "foster maladaptive achievement cognitions, such as attributions to lack of ability, and . . . lack of persistence and learned helplessness" (Bempechat, 1992, p. 35).

That the present model of schooling simply is not working is evidenced by a growing number of children in at-risk situations and drop-outs from middle and upper socioeconomic levels. Texas researchers noted as late as 1992 that state-delineated definitions of "at risk" only identified about 50 percent of all those students who eventually dropped out (Texas Education Agency, 1992, *Impact*). Other researchers find additional disturbing trends. The prototypical dropout is male, white, 16-17 years of age, overage for his grade, in the regular (not compensatory) program, transient, absent from school about 25 percent of the time, not participating in free/reduced lunch, and not identified by House Bill 1010 criteria (TASA, 1992, "Insight," p. 39). Legislative attempts to help this population have not yet made the mark.

Both Children of Wealth and Children of Poverty Are In At-Risk Situations

September 1991 data from dropout studies in San Antonio indicate that some 40 percent of dropouts are middle class, with a median family income of about $45,000 per year. Families of this significant population of "advantaged" dropouts are 96 percent Anglo, with two or three siblings in the household, and are often headed by highly skilled dual-income parents.

This new population of children in at-risk situations, Dr. Cynthia Franklin reports, is basically "disengaged." Franklin and colleague Calvin Streeter at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work note that this latest threat to the American dream is one which the community is barely willing to face. Franklin notes that "substance abuse, sexual abuse, the middle-class dysfunctional family, class consciousness, community bias, and ultimately the school—be it urban, suburban, rural, public, or private—have perpetuated the silence regarding the burgeoning numbers of middle-class dropouts'' (SEDL, 1991, p. 8).

Researchers have documented how the middle-class underachievement and dropout trend arises from a complicated mix of fairly new social dysfunctions—''like substance abuse; fast-track, dual income families; and a lonely, disengaged, latchkey existence among adolescents'' (SEDL, 1991, p. 8). This relatively recent problem is the consequence of increasingly dysfunctional family relationships. Although not all researchers concur, Franklin and Streeter assert that, particularly for African American middle class families, loss of internal values and the once-strong, insular black family unit, jeopardizes progress. Franklin warns that ''The effect of (this group's) wanderings in and out of school is that those who had been the cream of the college-bound crop may now fail to make any contribution to society, and most are more than likely to carry their dysfunctional behavior into the next-generation of the family'' (SEDL, 1991, p. 8). Many of these children in at-risk situations enter alternative schools where some find success, but many do not.

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Reform of Chapter 1 in Nation and in Texas Underway

Efforts are underway to change the way Chapter 1 funds flow so that innovation is encouraged within the guidelines of the program. Use of the regular teacher, tightly linked to the Chapter 1 teacher, is being encouraged. Many schools have begun innovative, cooperative, and heterogeneous projects in which the instructional focus is on Chapter 1 student needs, where the majority of students in the class are Chapter 1 are identified (Aleman, 1993, "Interview").

National momentum is gaining. Researchers at Harvard note, "Chapter 1 is no longer just a basic skills statute . . . It begins to provide a legally enforceable right to a quality education for low-achieving kids" (Ferguson, 1991, pp. 1-6). Anne Wheelock, in *Crossing the Tracks* (1992), provides extensive staff development and specific examples of the many ways that compensatory education can be provided in heterogeneous classes through school-wide projects that provide students not only with improved standardized (CTBS) scores, but also cross-curriculum higher-order thinking skills in a technology-rich environment (Wheelock,1992, pp. 132 ff.).

Research verifies that visible changes in attitude, belief, and practice recommended at the national level will be supported by leadership such as that provided when the Texas Education Agency made accelerated instruction the focus of its Chapter 1 Programs. Exchanging the mirror for the telescope into the future can only be seen as the greatest of initiatives to provide Texas children excellence and equity simultaneously. Training of state and school leaders in the most effective means of closing the achievement gap cannot be ignored. Understanding the full context into which this reform flows does not occur naturally, but requires intensive time commitments made to educating superintendents, principals, and community leaders. Because the problems of students in at-risk situations are extremely complex and constantly changing, it is imperative that school leaders be ongoingly educated in and evaluated on the best ways to serve this population.

QUESTION III

What helps kids the most? Restructured Environments and Accelerated Instruction

Overview

Closing the Gap Entails Real Work

Real work is never easy, and change challenges our most treasured possessions—our sense of who we are, what we are doing every day, and what that activity signifies. Pullout programs for remediation of students' shortcomings allow the basic model of the traditional school to remain untouched; tracked remedial classes alleviate the classroom only of the students whose inability to perform insistently reminds us of the model's too-numerous failures. What has gone wrong?

> *The indispensable condition for creating a world-class economy in a democratic society is the creation of world-class schools . . . Instead of evading reality by continually offering failed proposals—such as accountability based on test scores or vouchers for private schools—we need to get down to real work.*
>
> Arthur Wirth, *Phi Delta Kappan*
> January 1993

Basic Change is the Essential Element

Closing the Gap Requires that Educators And Students Become Thinkers

The "skill/drill/kill" syndrome has clearly been exposed. Educators, legislators, policymakers, and even parents are aware of the need for "higher-level" thinking skills and relating learning to a meaningful, work-related world. As Wirth notes, "When hammers and wrenches are displaced by numbers and buttons, a whole new kind of learning must begin, and it can be scary" (Wirth, 1993, p. 362). Don't higher order thinking skills and facility with analyses require that students as well as teachers be rather thoughtful in a new and entirely symbolic way?

But learning new ways of thinking is hardwork. Students themselves may resist, as any new teacher can attest, the individual teacher's efforts to get them to think, to analyze, and climb, however haltingly, to more challenging levels of analysis, symbolism, synthesis, and critique. It's easier to keep the level of thinking and teacher behavior just the way it was before reform, the essential elements, the TAAS test, and all the other incentives for change; student resistance is less and teachers are more satisfied with the status quo.

Closing the Gap Requires a New Pedagogy

"President Bill Clinton used the word 'Change' nine times in his inaugural address," a reporter told his National Public Radio audience. "What I was not prepared for was the moment when, in an effort to get around the crowd, I skirted down one of the back alleys there in D.C. and a young kid walked up and said, 'Have any change?'"

National Public Radio Broadcast
January 20, 1993

Author Martin Haberman calls the traditional approach to remediating children in at-risk situations the "pedagogy of poverty." His quantitative observations of teacher activity in the schools where the highest number of retentions tend to occur reveal the following teacher activities and often little else: giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, monitoring seatwork, reviewing assignments, giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, marking papers, and giving grades (Haberman, "Pedagogy of Poverty," 1991, p. 291).

Haberman notes that, while these acts in themselves are not inappropriate, done to the near exclusion of other types of activity, they amount to a caricature of learning, an imitative dirge. Exacerbated by teachers' sense that authoritarianism is basic to survival or success in the urban environment, the atmosphere "seethes with passive resentment" (Haberman, "Pedagogy of Poverty," 1991, p. 291). Haberman's observations are certainly corroborated by the work of Ogbu and other researchers who focus on the sociological aspects of schooling (Ogbu, 1986, p. 18). Significant research has been completed based on the sociological assessments of what happens in school classes; one notable response has been Comer's "School Development Model" in which change can occur within a process that is both understandable and not threatening. That model is discussed in more detail below (Comer, 1992, p. 2).

Historical Self-Perceptions Contribute to Behaviors Of Students in At-Risk Situations

School climate research increasingly points to the possibility that students in at-risk situations, particularly minority students, may have developed an "oppositional frame of reference" leading to an "anti-academic achievement ethic" (Bempechat, 1992, p. 7). Unlike Asians who voluntarily immigrated to the United States, African-Americans and Hispanics view cultural survival in opposition to the achievement culture represented by Anglo and often Asian efforts. Studies suggest that African-Americans and Hispanics who are high achievers worry about "acting white," and face the possibility of feeling "raceless" as their achievements accumulate (Bempechat, 1992, p. 7).

Getting in Touch with "Arrested Development"

Mr. Wendall is a bum
his only worries are sickness and an occasional harassment
by the police and their chase on civilians

We call him, but I just saw him
Eat off the food we waste—
civilization, I'll be really civilized,
Yes or No?

Who will be the judge?
When thousands of innocent men
could be brutally enslaved or
killed of our racist grudge. . .

Mr. Wendall has tried, tried to warn
us about our ways
but we don't hear him talk
Arrested Development
"Mr. Wendall," 1993

Skeptics need only look at the music of these often-disenfranchised students to see how important the sociocultural aspects of their lives are. From M.C. Hammer to NWA, to Ice T and Arrested Development, rap groups explore the world in which adolescents are not only estranged from their parents, but estranged from their society at large.

The "Us vs. Them" attitude is ignored by educators to their peril, and should inform pedagogy as clearly as should Piaget. Do we see students in at-risk situations as the "problem people" Consciously or subconsciously, "race matters" (West, "Learning to Talk of Race" in press). Could it be, further, that many of our children recognize, consciously or subconsciously, the futility of much of what they study—the uselessness of much of the out-of-touch information packaged as pablum for remedial kids? Could this recognition, in tension with our own failure to recognize the dissonance between what we teach and the world of work, be exacerbating the "us vs. them" attitude?

Recognition of and education regarding these dynamics point to the need to address the achievement gap on a variety of fronts. A new vision of what to teach along with a new approach to students in at-risk situations must encompass parents, communities, businesses, and peer levels. A full understanding of why students in at-risk situations behave in "disengaged" ways is the basis of appropriate schooling that addresses both academic and affective needs. Why doesn't it improve statistics to tell students on every bumper, on every billboard, and on every locker to "Just Say No"? Because the root cause of the behavior are student approaches and attitudes which cannot be glibly changed with mottos and repetition.

Much of the research on children in at-risk situations and remediation since the reform of the 1980's touches on these behaviors and on student motivation–for a reason. New York City 1990 Teacher of the Year Taylor Gatto, *without blaming the victim*, notes that his students tend to lack curiosity, be indifferent to the adult world, have a poor sense of the future, be ahistorical, cruel and lacking in compassion, uneasy with intimacy and candor, remain materialistic, dependent, and passive (Haberman, "Pedagogy of Poverty," 1991, p. 292). Other research corroborates the growing impatience, immediacy, and inability of children in at-risk situations to attend to long-range goals (Traver, 1992, pp. 46-47).

While environmental stresses in addition to inappropriate topics may reinforce some of these characteristics, these are precisely the characteristics which result in school from micro-management by objective, teacher-directed, check and re-check, myopic pedagogy which too frequently characterizes remedial instruction. This type of pedagogy must be replaced.

The New Model Must Allow Children in At-Risk Situations to Make Mistakes

Writer Margaret Clifford suggests that students must be allowed to "make errors" and take risks if they are to take responsibility for their own learning and become engaged (Clifford, 1990, p. 25). Lack of adequate focus on student responsibility for learning is, again, a legacy of the factory model. "The culture of the workplace," author T. Berry Brazelton notes, "is often one of perfectionism and of dependable rewards" (Brazelton, 1991, p. 22). Accepting self-responsibility is based, however, on a series of approximations and learned events implying, by necessity, committing many errors and misjudgments. Individuals who are not allowed, because of curricular pressures, or a skill/drill regimen, to experiment, to pose and attempt, to make errors and to correct them, cannot grow. Yet this is, essentially, the concept of the learners behind our piecemeal remedial curricula. We pick up a piece of a child's work and the first thing we ask is, "What's wrong with this work?" (Johnson and Leggett, 1992, videotape).

No Quick Fixes Will Close the Achievement Gap: the Role of Assessment

> ***In the beginning, there was the folder. And the folder was without form and devoid of purpose. And the educational spirit moved among the folders and said: "Bring me your rough drafts, your self-reflections, your jumbled messes and I will give you a new concept–the Portfolio." And the people gathered around and said: "Speak to us, oh wise one, of Portfolios." And the wise one spoke, and it was good***
>
> (R&D *Preview*, October 1992, p. 11).

The concept of who the learner is, what they have to learn, and what they have to bring–strengths, not deficits only–and how to evaluate their accomplishments will have to change (Knapp, Turnbull, Shields, 1990, p. 4). Student and teacher-proof curriculum will have to give way to genuine exploration and risk-taking for all students and most teachers, not just those in certain categories and programs (Murphy, 1989, p. 32) or teachers of Chapter 1 or remedial students. Testing for students as well as prospective teachers needs to be itself assessed.

The role of broad-based assessment will be critical, and beginning to evaluate and guide the learning of children in a variety of ways cannot be achieved overnight. Recent research affirms what nearly all teachers agree upon–that standardized testing does not reflect the more important learning goals educators seek to meet (R&D *Preview*, October, 1992, p. 8). Many psychologists and sociologists agree with classroom practitioners that "standardized tests overwhelm much of classroom practice," what Harvard psychologist Sheldon White calls "an affair in which magic, science, and myth are intermixed" (White, 1992, p. 133). While many would disagree regarding the extent to which testing damages students, the mainstream *National Commission on Testing and Public Policy* (1990) concludes:

- America must revamp the way it develops and utilizes human talent, and to do that, educational and employment testing must be restructured;

- current testing, predominantly multiple choice in format, is over-relied upon, lacks adequate public accountability, sometimes leads to unfairness in the allocation of opportunities, and too often undermines vital social policies. Testing, the commission adds, may mislead as an indicator of performance, may result in unfairness, is used too frequently, undermines social policies, and is subject to insufficient public accountability;

- to help promote greater development of the talents of all our people, alternative forms of assessment must be developed and more critically judged and used, so that testing and assessment open gates of opportunity rather than close them off. The commission asserts that testing policies and practices must be reoriented to promote the development of all human talent; testing programs should be redirected from overreliance on multiple-choice tests toward alternative forms of assessment, and test scores should be used only when they differentiate on the basis of characteristics relevant to the opportunities being allocated; and

- among other recommendations, the commission contends that research and development programs must be expanded to create assessments that promote the development of the talents of all our peoples and that testing should be used to enhance human development and not to in any way limit it (*National Commission on Testing and Public Policy*, 1990, pp. ix-xi).

In another critique in the February 1993, *Kappan*, writers Madaus and Kellaghan note that it is not so much the broad range of assessments or ''authenticity'' of the assessments that matter, but the ''high stakes'' attached to test scores which caused tests to drive and narrow the curriculum (Feb. 1993, *Kappan*, p. 458). Several years of experience with ''SAT's'' or ''standard assessment tasks'' included presentations (oral, written, pictorial, video, computer, practical demonstration), modes of operation (mental only, written, practical/oral), and model of response (multiple-choice questions, short written responses, open-ended written responses, oral presentations, practical demonstrations, creating a practical outcome or product, using a computer) (Feb. 1993, *Kappan*, p. 462).

What emerged from the complex picture of assessments in England and Wales, where the scores were used to compare schools and mark national progress–differed markedly from the picture produced through SAT's in Scotland, where assessment results were diagnostic and formative. In England and Wales, management problems, increased stress, lack of comparability, varying quality of moderator activity, level of challenge, and ambiguity in instructions were but a few of the hurdles encountered (Feb. 1993, *Kappan*, p. 466.) The time involved, the costs, and the value of the information gained caused the researchers to question the validity of the experiment (Feb. 1993, *Kappan*, p. 467). Other educators in the assessment conversation contend that broad-based assessment can be made affordable, will drive the system towards more appropriate learning outcomes and does provide, if advocated by teachers instead of legislators, a critical missing piece in the puzzling picture of school reform (Feb. 1993, *Kappan*, p. 476-77; see also, *Educational Leadership*, Volume 50, No. 5, February, 1993; complete volume on assessment).

There Can be No Escape from Self-Responsibility

Unquestionably, the unit of change is the whole, not any one part (Haberman, "The Pedagogy of Poverty," 1991, p. 292). Systemic change is the only way to share responsibility for learning with students. Who can make a baby eat or potty-train a toddler? Who can make the proverbial horse drink? Who, in fact, can *make* students in poverty learn or can *make* children in at-risk situations take charge? Who can make principals, teachers, administrators, and politicians do what they need to do to change the system? The need to change is now so great that not changing is no longer stasis; it's degeneration.

Educators will have to come face to face with a number of issues of control. Who is in control, *really*, when a student who "ain't misbehavin'" is allowed passively to avoid learning in exchange for lack of misconduct? Who is in control, really, when thought-provoking conversations are repeatedly disrupted by misbehavior until the teacher acquiesces to the lowest norm and says, "Okay. Put your books away. Number down the left side of the page, 1-20, and copy from the board all the words starting with *w*." One teacher alone cannot persevere until the culture of learning changes in her classroom; insofar as success is possible, reform that creates schools which function as "organic wholes" is imperative. That is to say, equity cannot be achieved by patchwork pasting of one or another "equity initiative" or "equity program" on top of the current structure (Murphy, 1989, p. 32).

Establishing forms of internal control, as critical now as when Montessori established them for children of poverty in Italy nearly 100 years ago–requires lessons planned around issues students and society regard as vital; it involves a recognition of human differences and a multicultural awareness and respect; it seeks to elicit the "big picture" and not isolated facts; it includes joint teacher/student planning of the curriculum; it discusses what "fair" is, what "just" and "real" are; it articulates ideas throughout objectives, lessons, units, events, and epoches in students' lives; it requires review and reflection; access to and an understanding of technological data bases and systems is critical; and it asks the students "why" they believe what they believe (Haberman, "Pedagogy of Poverty," 1991, p. 294).

The pedagogy that works is inherently thoughtful, and constantly demands that both teachers and students learn and grow. *Such an environment is seldom seen in remedial settings* in contemporary schools and it is no wonder children in at-risk situations have not always developed voracious appetites for higher-order thinking challenges. Further, acting upon the ideological foundation which researchers conclude is crucial–in the context of growing demands for national and standardized curricula–presents a formidable challenge.

We Can Only Conclude

Neither social promotion nor retention, apparently, work. What can we do? Reconceptualizing and restructuring the school, educating and empowering the personnel who run it must happen because, having rejected social promotion for reasons now unambiguous in the literature and having established that retention also has no inherent value, researchers can come to no other conclusion.

Solving the problems of students in at-risk situations requires understanding the complex factors that lead to underachievement. A variety of factors that predict underachievement must be surmounted in any model that is effective with students in at-risk situations. These factors include poverty, dysfunctional families, race, ethnicity, teenage pregnancy, low levels of parental education, low expectations, and language minority status (Bempechat, 1992, pp. 1-13). As numerous studies have pointed out, these and other factors work synergistically within the context of the school, condemning anything less than total reconceptualizing to minimum success or failure. As Fullan notes, "Factors affecting change function in interaction and must be treated as such; solutions directed at any one factor in isolation will have minimal impact" (Fullan, 1991, p. 13).

For a wide spectrum of reasons, the system as it is executed in most schools simply doesn't work. Only comprehensive reform will provide equity and excellence. Further, ". . . to say that retention or remediation does not work, is not to say that a continuous progress model does not work; children learn different things at different rates" (Grant, interview). If we are to unequivocally provide equal opportunity to all students in a system infused with excellence, continuous progress, meaningful learning, and a holistic approach to social, mental, and physical health must replace the lockstep age-correlated pattern of outmoded, fact-intensive curriculum and remediation students now experience.

Accelerated Instruction—Life Boat for Children in At-Risk Situations

It's Time to Create A Clean and Seamless Slate

Several total school restructuring initiatives show significant promise for closing the achievement gap. All can be placed under the rubric, "Total Quality Management." An overview of that rubric is critical to understanding what is different about quality schools from other models and/or educational fads that came before TQM.

The "total quality education" (quality schools) movement, detailed in the January 1993, issue of the *Kappan* and other journals promises to be a critical piece of the solution for implementing palpable reform for students in at-risk situations (Schmoker and Wilson, pp. 389-395). Researchers and reformers alike assert *ad infinitum* that piecemeal changes will not work in the schools. Into this context, Schmoker and Wilson note that something can be learned from the Japanese that would make "equal opportunity" more than an empty phrase. It would enable America finally to reach that "forgotten half" of the student population that has traditionally been deprived of a high-quality education" (Schmoker and Wilson, p. 390).

Accelerated Instruction is a Type of Total Quality Model

Background

What would happen if, today, all the chief executive officers of all the businesses in the United States—from Exxon and General Motors down to the smallest mom-and-pop stores—sat down at one huge conference table and agreed that from this day forward they would all, by design, make sure that every day's products and services conform to the bell-shaped curve? Some of their output would be good or even excellent, but most would be mediocre or inferior. . . Rightly or wrongly, (most of today's children) have come to believe that schools exist, not to help them improve, but rather to judge, criticize, and rank-order their efforts.

(Bonstingl, *Schools of Quality*, p. 4)

Quality schools research purports that schools of mediocrity have been the result of a singularly outcomes-driven, sorting paradigm that must be totally turned inside out. Researchers detail how decisionmaking in Japan is done collectively; teambuilding makes persistent use of data–not to find blame or establish fault–but to improve the system. One guarantees quality by building it into the process at every turn of the hand (Holt, 1993, p. 382). In other words, quality models establish competency and performance throughout the whole educative process; they do not test for "holes." As such, the quality model speaks directly to the "deficit" model which forms the basis for so many failed remediation efforts.

Replace that Rearview Mirror Image with a Focus on Quality.

Total Quality philosophy founder Deming rejects the basis of driving the education process using solely a series of objectives which he likens to "running a business by looking in the rearview mirror." Intrinsic quality as well as outcomes objectives should drive the educational system; test scores alone should not. Deming inspired his workers to cooperate, not compete; he established the now-famous "quality circles" that would encourage reflection in a non-critical environment (Holt, 1993, p. 383). With a steady focus on the process of production, Deming's principles call for fundamental changes in a company's culture. These include team building, cooperation, definition of quality by the customer, modelling of the spirit of quality from management to collegial employees, and linking theory and practice through team problem solving (Holt, 1993, p. 385). While it promises much to a statewide educational system, Deming's model would undoubtedly characterize the current system, driven as it is by a "rational-managerial model" as unfortunately resistant to change, and would recommend it become more focused on the "pursuit of liberty" and "child-centeredness" (Holt, 1993, p. 388).

Put a Pleasurable Spin on Work.

Deming notes that teamwork, continual investment in training for employees, and *an application of research to work* makes work not only productive, but enjoyable. Deming's work has been corroborated and expanded by the work of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who points to these same conditions that will prevail where the work is both productive and pleasurable; that is, "given the right conditions, the best part of many people's lives is when they are engaged in their daily work" (Schmoker and Wilson, p. 390). When individuals can self-evaluate, make changes, enjoy exploration with colleagues, fine tune the process, and self-evaluate again, they are part of a process that actualizes meaning in their lives and which literally puts them in touch with their future.

School–More Fun than TV?

What the Japanese have tapped is the psychological *need* to be productive. Csikszentmihalyi points to research indicating that, under optimal conditions, people prefer productive work more than almost anything else, "even TV" (Schmoker and Wilson, p. 390). Dewey, Piaget, Montessori, and educators throughout the history of school have attested to the intrinsic love of students for work when appropriately conceived. Schools restructuring seek, in part, to tap this intrinsic love for work/play that will help all children perform at their maximum.

Certainly a clearer rationale for motivation would help students in at-risk situations individualize and internalize goals and overcome many of the barriers erected by a watered-down remedial curriculum. For most students, however, this context remains but a dream.

Quality Models Entail Just A Few "Doable" Principles

Schmoker concludes, "Anyone who knows anything about public education knows that, in general, what Deming preaches. . . is not happening in our schools, not by a long shot. The good news is that what happens at places like Toyota (which have implemented quality schools) comes down to a few simple, very doable things" (Schmoker and Wilson, p. 390). Quality principles embody these ideas:

- *meaningful* work is the basis of successful productivity;
- collective goals are more energizing than individual ones;
- continuous learning and a sense of improvement are basic needs; and
- improvement must be palpable and precise, providing constant feedback.

Schmoker warns that quality cannot be laid as a "trapping" over the present, failing system. Basic to understanding the reconceptualizing that must take place is a willingness to look again at the content of the curriculum, to redistribute power and to place unprecedented levels of trust in employees (Schmoker and Wilson, p. 390). How can schools provide equity and excellence amidst so much change?

The Three R's: Reflection, Reconceptualizing, and Restructuring

Restructuring can be defined as "activities that change fundamental assumptions, practices, and relationships, both within the organization and between the organization and the outside world in ways that lead to improved student learning outcomes. Schools are responding to changes in the economic system based on low-skilled jobs to a service-oriented system, built on varied employee skills. Schools are simultaneously responding to changes in the family structure and racial composition in the population as well as the multinational nature of business" (Conley, 1991, unpaginated).

Closing the achievement gap is the real work of reconceptualizing and restructuring, and research indicates that nothing less than a total quality environment will satisfy the demands being placed upon the schools. For children in at-risk situations, such a restructured environment will foster the qualities they need to thrive. In *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School, and Community,* author Bonnie Benard illuminates which characteristics children who rise above their often adverse conditions share. These four "protective traits" are:

- social competence;
- strong problem solving skills;
- autonomy; and
- a sense of purpose and future (Benard, 1991, unpaginated).

Not by accident, these are the very characteristics that quality/accelerated schools foster–the characteristics that will help students of poverty and children in at-risk situations thrive despite limited advantages. Benard notes that social competence includes "being caring, flexible, and having a sense of humor; problem-solving includes thinking abstractly, reflectively, and flexibly; autonomy includes having a sense of identity, independence, and feeling in control over one's environment; and the sense of purpose and future means being motivated and hopeful and believing in a bright future (Benard, 1991, unpaginated).

"Break the mold" quality has all the usual components of the restructured environment–multiage classrooms, cooperative learning, project-oriented curricula, interdisciplinary teaching, community service, performance-based and authentic assessment and school-based social services–plus one other critical feature: intensive staff development in the context of a clear and relevant destination.

Exemplary Total Quality Management Models

James Comer's School Development Program is perhaps the most well known of the quality models. Comer "argues that raising levels of academic achievement is not a sufficient goal for inner city educators. Educators must also prepare children to become responsible, contributing members of society. . ." (Bempechat, 1992, p. 27).

Focusing on the relationships students have with family members, teachers, peers, and community, the School Development Program attends to the psychological and social needs of students in an atmosphere of shared goals. Established in 1968, longitudinal studies of the school–which demonstrate unqualified significant gains in achievement–also evidence ways in which the quality model builds leadership and behavior competence in students who are in at-risk situations (Bempechat, 1992, p. 28-29).

The quality model is not simply overlaid, however, on the traditional outcomes-driven school. A school/university partnership, Comer's project, the New Haven Schools Project (NHSP), consists of an administrative team of teachers, principals, and support personnel; school committees on curriculum, personnel, and evaluation; a mental health team from Yale; a pupil personnel team composed of psychiatrists, social workers, principal, nurse, community relations workers, special education teachers, and aides; a parent program in which parents work as teacher aides, a focus program to bring students who were one or more years behind in mathematics or reading up to grade level; workshops to bring parents and teachers together; and an extended day program (Bempechat, 1992, p. 28).

Similar characteristics create a winning combination for the Baltimore Public Schools where Robert Slavin has spearheaded "Success for All" (SFA). Also a school/university partnership with Johns Hopkins University, SFA focuses on the prekindergarten through third grades and attempts to ensure that all students receive equitable instruction and achievement in reading, mathematics, and language prior to entering third grade. Like Comer's model–very labor intensive–SFA includes one-on-one tutoring, assessments of pupil progress every eight weeks, a half-day preschool and full-day kindergarten, a family support team consisting of two social workers and one parent that provides parent education and encourages parent participation in their childrenUs schooling, ongoing teacher training, special education for those previously assigned to it, and an advisory committee composed of the school principal, a program facilitator, teacher representative, social worker, and the Hopkins staff (Bempechat, 1992, p. 28).

The work of Berkeley professor Uri Treisman attempts to act upon Ogbu's observations that African-Americans and Hispanics suffer from anti-academic achievement cultures. Treisman attempts to help students in at-risk situations grow on their own terms and in their own way. Treisman initiated the Mathematics Workshop Program (MWP) which sought to cluster five-seven mathematics students into study groups. The cooperative learning habits of successful Chinese students are used, combining study and social time twice a week in two-hour sessions. Treisman "suggests that the benefit of MWP. . . is that it 'created academically oriented peer groups whose participants value success and academic achievement.'" (Bempechat, 1992, p. 31). Results are consistently encouraging.

The Essence of Accelerated Learning

The philosophy undergirding accelerated learning states that students who have fallen behind are too frequently assigned low status and have had low expectations communicated to them. Conceptualized as a quality model, Levin's "Stanford Accelerated Schools Project (SASP)" advocates, "Don't Remediate; Accelerate!" Now a highly acclaimed national movement, "Accelerated Learning" focuses on students in at-risk situations and attempts to maintain a reconceptualized, restructured, total school environment that fully enriches their students' *lives* and learning. Other programs, as successful as Levin's, are also known as accelerated instruction models.

Schooling which fits this model:

- sets clear goals for students, parents, and staff;
- has regular student and school assessments;
- monitors nutrition and health;
- uses cooperative learning and peer tutoring as well as community resources;
- seeks parent participation and training; and
- features an extended day.

During the extended period, senior citizens and college students provide one-on-one assistance with homework. Students are brought up to grade level by the end of sixth grade using a total-school approach to closing the gap similar to that of Comer's New Haven Schools Project.

The Ideology of Accelerated Instruction.

There is nothing "at risk" about the students who are the topic of this concept study; the children who come to our schools have no inherent defects or deficits (Levin, 1992, p. 1). These students are essentially mismatched to the environment and the norms we define as "school success." Reforms in the past have failed to close the achievement gap because the little engine that tried so hard was simply ascending the wrong mountain. It does no good to continually refine the outcomes expected, to strengthen the engine of reform with continual testing of students and teachers, and to top it all off with a request for greater and greater funds in the face of yet more standardized test results that bode a dire future when the engine is going the wrong direction.

The process of schooling is *itself* a schoolmaster. In order to succeed with students in at-risk situations, educators and communities must focus on providing the students (the products in the manufacturing metaphor) with what they need, and the earlier, the better. Students have difficulty saying no to drugs when they use the drugs to ease the pain; students have difficulty saying no to gangs when the gangs are the only source of peer companionship they are offered; students have trouble saying no to teenage pregnancy when it offers them the most obvious source of affirmation, control, and empowerment they can consciously or subconsciously imagine (Levin, 1992, pp. 1-4). The ideology which works with these students builds competence into the student by providing them with counseling, after school programs, summer programs, healthy food and safe places to exercise and grow, mentors who guide them and other students who need them. *It is the students' needs and not curriculum outcomes that determine the structure of the educational paradigm developed.*

Beat that Villain

"The Villains" who perpetuate ineffective strategies for students in at-risk situations are people who do the following;

- quickly identify the at-risk kids;
- stigmatize them by labelling them as remedial, Chapter 1, etc.;
- set no goals for these children;
- slow down instruction so that as many as possible start "acting out";
- use "drill and kill" methods of instruction until school is completely joyless;
- be sure parents remain unaware of your efforts;
- be sure materials for the program are designed far away from the students; and
- treat educational professionals as mindless assembly line workers (Levin, 1992, p. 2).

While mastery learning, a basic foundation upon which restructured schools are based, and quality models may initially look difficult to synthesize, they are a mandatory marriage of reform school initiatives. What accelerated instruction adds to the mastery model is the institutional supports and culture needed to sustain building quality into every child as the child seeks mastery. As educators in Johnson City, N.Y. and elsewhere have discovered, no reform initiative can be taken piecemeal, but must be modified to meet local student needs (Berkson, 1993, p. 46).

What Accelerated Instruction Looks Like: The Purpose, the Power, the Strength, and the Results.

Like quality schools in general, accelerated instruction models are based on three principles–unity of purpose, empowerment coupled with responsibility, and building on strengths.

The Purpose. Unlike a mission statement which, Levin notes, is a symbol, the "dream" around which accelerated schools revolve is the very heartbeat of the school. For example, the guiding dream of the Fairbanks Elementary School, an Accelerated School in Springfield, Missouri, is "wisdom." Thematic units put flesh on the dream. Teachers' talents are abundantly visible, as are students' many successful expressions of the dream. Fairbanks Elementary has unleashed a deep fund of teacher, parent, and student talent by living out its goal on a daily basis:–"Keeper of the dream–success for all" (Beauchamp, 1992, pp. 32-38).

The Power. "Empowerment coupled with responsibility" is the second principle of accelerated instruction. Moving the decision-making closest to the implementers of the decision is not the only factor influencing the effectiveness of this principle. More important, school-based educators must be able to say how their decisions relate to and will further the dream they all hold. Empowerment is gained as a group, not as individuals; when goals are not obtained, the group looks around to see what went wrong–not who to blame. Decisions are best made school-wide, not by individuals who function as chairs of various departments. New roles for administrators are emerging, bringing with them new opportunities and training needs (Levin and Hopfenberg, 1991, p. 12).

The Strength. Building on students' strengths is a key in accelerated instruction (Levin, 1992, p. 5). The whole ecological system of the child is focused on building on strengths. Why does this work? Educators who have built systems based primarily on outcomes have failed to recognize the role that "affect" plays in the educative process; that is, "how we feel when we come to school is going to determine how we are going to function" (Levin, 1992, p. 5). Creating environments where students *feel* relaxed, needed, capable, safe, and loved is conducive to success for all. Such an environment turned the Hollibrook Elementary School in suburban Houston from a rapidly-disintegrating educational environment, plagued by violence and poor morale, into the type of school that boasts growing and energetic enrollment, high levels of parent participation, growth in student self-esteem, integrated social service strategies for students, and successful competition on standardized measures (Johnson and Leggett, videotape). The accelerated schools mantra, one that seems to jolt many of its new adherents into action, is simple: "If it (this school) is not good enough for their own children, it is not yet good enough for any child" (Fall, 1991, *Accelerated Schools Project Newsletter*, p. 3).

"You know, I forget what grade I'm in!" Imagine a child thinking of himself or herself in terms of the effectiveness, the innovation, and the merit of the products and projects s/he and the classmates have produced instead of what grade s/he is in. In terms of self-perception, multiage classrooms are a powerful paradigm shift, entrusting children with the ability to assess their own progress and education by looking at the outcomes or products they have capably built instead of perceiving schooling as jumping one hoop, or grade, after another.

Principal Marilyn Butcher at Travis Heights Elementary School in Austin, Texas recently moved her school towards a multiage format. She reports that, as educators at her school became aware that in Austin Independent School District over 600 children failed Grade 1, a group consensus grew that something basic had to change. Butcher focuses on the central role of faculty "ownership" of both the problem and the solution, of doing whatever it takes better to serve the children in the school.

"Having to make promotion decisions is difficult," the principal said. "We make promotion decisions in January, so even if the child makes great progress in the spring, it's too late to account for that progress. The whole system is flawed, not the children." Butcher further observes that standard norm-referenced test results indicate the wide range of abilities and knowledge within each grade level. "A multiage environment is an organizational structure which increases the probability that characteristics of accelerated learning will occur," she adds.

Results thus far are encouraging. Butcher notes, "We may have a child spend two years in a Grade 1-2, then spend only one year in a Grade 3-4. For example, one child came to us who was retained in first grade who was, at the time, seven. Normally, he would have spent first grade again as a seven-year old. We put him into a Grade 1-2 with his peers. We are hoping next year to put him into either a Grade 2-3, again with his peers, or more probably into a Grade 3-4. By the end of that year, he will completely have regained the year he lost.''

Professional development has been a key for Travis Heights Elementary School. All the teachers have received training in gifted education. Parent communication and support are also critical, and the PTA has been pivotal in helping to inform parents about changes. ''Teaching here is hard work with long hours and requiring much dedication,'' the principal notes. ''But it's also more fun. We're talking about starting our own radio station; we're teaching teachers all kinds of things, and the students are the winners.'' Widely supported by scholars in the fields of curriculum theory, brain research, cooperative learning, sociology, and more, multiage classrooms are a central piece in the accelerated instruction model.

The Results. While standardized tests don't measure self-esteem, they do give excellent ratings to accelerated instruction. For example, Levin reports, ''Daniel Webster in San Francisco showed the largest gain of any school in the district in all three subjects assessed by CTBS (California Test of Basic Skills).'' Similar gains have been recorded not only at Hollibrook Elementary in Spring Branch, Texas, but at Fairbanks Elementary in Springfield, Missouri, J. Will Jones Elementary in Houston, Texas, and others now part of the 140-school network (*Accelerated Schools Project*, Fall, 1992, pp. 8-12).

Becoming Connoisseurs: the Philosophical Roots of Assessment in Accelerated Instruction.

Because we want to have schools good enough for our own children for *all* children, Elliot Eisner suggests we have within us the capacity to judge whether or not our schools are performing adequately with students. ''. . . we can evaluate our own schools and activities by becoming 'educational connoisseurs' in which we develop a taste and evaluative expertise for what is good education. We can share our expectations and observations and sharpen our sensitivity to what is happening in our schools. . . . Consider the power that this strategy provides to us as educators. Instead of waiting until the end of the year or the beginning of the following year to tell us whether our schools are good enough, we can make expert observations at any moment to ask that question and use a far richer set of information and a more diverse set of criteria'' (*Accelerated Schools Project*, Fall, 1992, pp. 8-12).

Assessment, Levin continues, builds on our collective dream or vision on which the entire school is based, one that is derived from working together and sharing a common sense of the kind of school that would work for our own children, for all children. "It draws on our responsibility for the consequences of our instructional, curricular, and organizational decisions, providing us with the information on whether these decisions have been appropriate to our vision or need to be modified..." In both critical goals of accelerated instruction–establishment of accelerated school governance and decision processes as well as the implementation of the decisions that emerge–assessment plays a central role. Such a deliberate, community-wide effort usually takes no less than five and often more than six years (*Accelerated Schools Project*, Fall, 1992, pp. 8-12).

Uses of Technology in Quality/Accelerated Models.

Evidence is mounting that the most appropriate uses of technology for students in at-risk situations do not include pullout computer labs where students do electronic worksheets (Lane, interview). Such practices, replicated thousands of times across the nation, give the impression of teaching students in at-risk situations how to deal with technology when, in fact, little is learned about technology and certainly less is learned about the type of reading, writing, speaking, listening, or application skills that will be needed in the year 2000 (Wirth, 1993, p. 364).

Unquestionably, technology must be a tool used across the curriculum for doing a variety of tasks related to the real world of high-tech work that is imminently upon us. One project that perhaps best illustrates the uses of technology that will prepare students in at-risk situations for the future is the "Blue Ridge Project!" located in Greer, South Carolina. In this school-wide effort, students not only use technology across the curriculum, but develop their own software to learn about the subjects they are studying.

An interdisciplinary, interactive multimedia approach, the "Blue Ridge Project!" is a school/university collaborative in which students choose topics to research, cooperatively develop their own courseware or multimedia approach, then use the software to learn more about the topic and to teach one another. "This approach turns kids into lifelong learners of the future," Bill Mitchell, director of the project, attests (Mitchell, *Blue Ridge Project!*, interview and videotape). During the summers, the students who have developed software to teach courses train teachers in how to do the same; the students receive accolades and the teachers receive graduate credit.

While the great majority of Chapter 1 expenditures for computer and multimedia technologies are not wisely spent, there are some exceptions. Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow (ACOT) enables students to simulate a newspaper company, network students internationally through electronic mail, bill for the newspaper, and publish the piece entirely themselves (Wirth, 1993, p. 364). The Texas Education Network (TENET) offers nearly unlimited resources for creative infomated projects that simulate the real world of technology. Getting students linked to TENET, training teachers and students in how to use it, and ensuring that technology is used thoroughly throughout an appropriate and relevant curriculum requires immense expenditures of money, and a commitment to the future that the public and the politicians they "drive" have not yet been educated to see as critical.

Vital Missing Link: Teacher Recruitment, Preparation, Retention, and Professional Development

A Teacher for One Day is like a Parent for a Lifetime

—Ancient Chinese Proverb

Teacher Ideology

Since many of the changes that must occur center around belief–beliefs about who children are, what they can accomplish, and what they need–obtaining a teaching force composed of individuals who are both good people and can teach is imperative (Haberman, 1991, "Catching Up"). The ideological component of the teacher screening and training dynamic is, however, currently missing in traditional programs of teacher education. Recruiting, screening, and preparing teachers who will excel in a wide variety of settings, including with students in at-risk situations, is an urgent priority.

Minority Representation

Nationally, a teaching force that is 10 percent minority teaches students who are 26 percent minority (Feistritzer, 1990, p. 13). In Texas, the 1992 student population was 51 percent female and 49 percent male; over 75 percent of teachers in 1992 were female and over half were white females ("Policy Research," January 1993, p. 8). Whereas traditional teacher education programs typically graduate about 10-12 percent minority teachers, alternative teacher certification programs graduate as much as 51 percent minority teachers (Texas Education Agency, *Alternative Teacher Certification*, p. 48).

However, this fact may not be as critical to students in at-risk situations as is the attitude of those teachers of any color who enter the public schools with a desire to teach. The "deficit" model we have so long relied on to help us cope with these students has helped us to ignore not only changes that must be made in the schools, but changes that must be made in how we educate teachers.

Quality Models of Teacher Education: Alternative Routes and School/University Partnerships

Research would indicate that alternative routes to certification will bring more minority teachers into the work force and will bring in more teachers whose expectations for students in at-risk situations are high. That is, the belief systems of the individuals recruited via alternative teacher certification programs tend to show higher expectations and greater sympathy for students in at-risk situations, be more reform-oriented, and be more attuned to the need for minority representation among faculties (Feistritzer, 1990, p. 24). In Texas as well as in many other areas of the nation where the Haberman screening device is used to screen into programs individuals who can work effectively with students in at-risk situations, large numbers of alternatively-prepared teachers are succeeding in schools with large populations of students in at-risk situations. These teachers tend to be older, mid-career switchers whose chief desire (69 percent) in entering public education is to "give something back" to society. That desire was expressed by only about 32 percent of their younger, mostly Anglo and female traditional teacher education graduates (Feistritzer, 1990, p. 11) who had not previously succeeded in any or many jobs fulltime.

In the same way that traditional models of schooling are "deficit" models for students in at-risk situations, so traditional teacher education is a deficit model for prospective teachers. It fails to build on strengths that prospective teachers already have. But in the same way that we now know that more and more seatwork doth not necessarily a problem-solving, innovative, disciplined student make, so we also know that more and more college courses do not necessarily a good teacher make. Unlike the traditional model, alternative teacher training occurs in the context of hands-on instruction in a collaboratively developed site-based program which previews for candidates the accelerated instruction of the quality model. Clearly, the program has given minorities a new opportunity to enter the teaching profession and has helped give momentum to kindergarten through baccalaureate level restructuring.

As noted above, assessment for individuals desiring teacher certification should change to reflect a restructured environment, and indeed, assessment has become more broad-based in the alternative teacher certification model. Teachers *will* tend to test students as they themselves have been tested, creating in the process either gatekeepers or gateways for students in at-risk situations. Recommendations to the *National Commission on Testing and Public Policy* would suggest a further step in teacher assessment: to substitute the standardized "gatekeeper" that has eliminated entrance for numerous minorities with one or more of the following:

- trainability tests: presentation of standardized samples of job-related training materials followed by assessment of learning with paper-and-pencil or performance tests;

- work samples: performance of a task or set of tasks that have been shown (usually on the basis of a job analysis) to have direct, central bearing on the job in question. The tasks or job simulations are performed under standardized conditions;

- biodata: biographical information collected in a standard application blank or a specially developed biodata form; and

- assessment centers: use of a comprehensive set of assessment techniques according to standardized procedures, with emphasis placed on situational exercises and job-related simulations such as group problem-solving, fact-finding exercises, oral presentations, and role play (Richard Reilly, "Toward Better Assessment in Employment," *National Commission on Testing and Public Policy*, 1990, p. 26).

Were alternative teacher certification models and centers of professional development and technology encouraged to use these measures in lieu of exit measures, teacher education assessment would not discriminate against culturally diverse populations and would also model best practice.

Several critical improvements in the teacher preparation approach make alternative certification work for children in at-risk situations. These improvements include:

- alternative certification candidates, called "interns," fill legitimate vacancies–often the very positions they fill when they seek a vacancy after credentialling. Student teaching, on the other hand, often occurs with master teachers who have "climbed the ladder" out of the mode where they are dealing with children in at-risk situations, making the student teaching experience lack authenticity.

- demographic factors such as those noted above–the typical Anglo, female, 22-year old traditional college graduate–contribute to high turnover in schools with high populations of children in at-risk situations. That the teaching force is not representative of the students is a matter of critical concern. An understanding of the students' cultural language is imperative; further, researchers note that the absence of role models for students such as young Hispanic women in at-risk situations leads to underachievement and dropping out (AAUW, p. 28).

- candidates are not credentialled until they have performed successfully for a whole year, building known quality into the prospective teacher who can not only guarantee that she or he can pass tests about children in at-risk situations, but can also teach them; and
- the link to the world of work is most firmly established by individuals who have worked. Mid-career switchers into the schools can more readily see how to make education relevant than can those who have never worked anywhere at all, but have been primarily students all their lives. In a world where learning about technology and its cross-curricular applications is a "must," teachers who have used technology in the world of work are particularly strong advocates for relevant education.

Alternative forms of teacher credentialling emphasize the importance of building quality into the prospective teachers throughout the process of teacher preparation. Assessment is broad-based; practice occurs in a hands-on mode in a realistic setting, with a wide variety of support mechanisms in place. Perhaps most important, accountability in the alternative teacher certification model is "customer-friendly." That is, the principals, colleagues, and superintendents who will have to live with the product–the new teacher–play primary roles in his or her interning into the profession under the guidance of a master mentor. Credentialling occurs collaboratively.

This quality model of teacher education is being emulated and expanded upon in Texas in school/university partnerships entitled "Centers for Professional Development and Technology." As noted above, children in at-risk situations tend to be placed in schools where teacher turnover is high (Ascher, p. 2). School/university partnerships have been profoundly instrumental in providing new and better ways of recruiting teachers and strengthening teaching for children in at-risk situations. They have also formed structures that provide better access to high quality college educations for minority students and others in at-risk situations (Ascher, 1988, p.7 ff.).

At present, profound changes are occurring in teacher education in Texas. Outcomes for professional educator preparation are being generated, synthesized, and discussed; teacher assessment by portfolio is being debated. An institutional accountability system for professional educator preparation programs is being proposed to the State Board of Education that would enter new programs into the accountability system in 1995 and result in an outcomes-based certification system by 1998. Such a model may encourage professors of education and supporting university faculty to model the types of teaching new teachers are encouraged to perform (''Policy Research,'' January, 1993, p. 17).

Professional Development: Keying in the ''Smart'' School Machine

Research confirms what common sense, principals, and teachers suggest: that little restructuring can take place in the context of teachers' current work loads. The type of staff development needed is not only blocks of time such as a three-day staff development project in accelerated instruction, but fewer classes to teach on a daily basis. In other words, if students are expected to make continuous progress, so should teachers be expected continually to grow more effective. But continuous progress in reform is not possible in one fifty-minute period a day during which parents need to be contacted, students need to be tutored or have missed assignments explained, grading occurs, and numerous interruptions are commonplace.

International comparisons of the culture and conditions of teachers in the workplace quickly facilitate an understanding of why our state and nation are lagging. A study compared two cities in the United States–Chicago and Minneapolis to two cities in China on several issues of education reform. Among them was the time spent on professional development. ''Beijing teachers are responsible for classes for no more than three hours a day; for those with homeroom duties, the total is four hours,'' researcher Stevens reports. He notes that the situation is similar in Japan and Taiwan where data indicates that teachers are in charge of classes only 60 percent of the time (Stevenson, p. 75). Teachers in academically advanced cultures work more cooperatively and see themselves primarily as well-prepared guides, not conduits of information (Stevenson, 1992, p. 75).

Altering the system to attract and keep the best and the brightest teachers is a tremendous and crucial task. The challenge of restructuring schools and learning to build the complex synergy that makes an accelerated school work takes time to read, reflect, experiment, evaluate, and reflect again on a daily basis. Fullan asserts, ''Time for joint planning, joint teaching arrangements, staff development policies, new roles such as mentors, and school improvement procedures are examples of structural change at the school level that is conducive to improvement'' (Fullan, 1991, p. 18).

A critical "cog" in the smart machine of reform is the concept of the teacher as learner. The teacher who is increasingly effective will be an inquirer, a reflector, a collaborator, and will possess numerous and growing technical skills (Fullan, 1991, p. 19). Leadership in the process is not only the role of the principal; the teachers as well as students alternatively take the lead role in providing impetus for change. This leadership extends thoroughly throughout the classroom, the school site, the district, and beyond, and is an amalgam of professional teaching competencies and interpersonal communication skills (Sparks, 1983, p. 66). Staff development must exhibit and expect both qualities, and is certainly less effective when schools hire an expensive outside consultant to come in and "talk down" to teachers (Sparks, 1983, p. 67).

Implementing accelerated instruction requires the building of many skills that are not taught in college, but teachers are expected to know–systems management, budgeting, teambuilding, interviewing, hiring, and areas of potential litigation (Showers and Bennett, 1990, p. 84). These difficult areas require discussion, practice, evaluation, reflection, and extensive information sharing in order to implement them in the school and obtain the level of professionalism to which all teachers aspire. In an accelerated instruction model, we expect more than minimum competency, from students and teachers alike. Yet how can we make every teacher a visionary?

Mary Futrell asserts that ". . . if America's teachers are to make the most of their emancipation, they will need staff development programs that free them from habits borne of years of imposed servitude. . . . Risk-taking must be the norm, not the exception' (Futrell, 1991, p. 2). Schlechty visualizes the formative role of staff development in helping teachers become self-governing leaders and notes that the leadership teachers give is "contextual," or "situational," and demands inherently that teachers move away from the status quo and into the future (Futrell, 1991, p. 3).

Schlechty, Lieberman, Costa and other leaders in staff development throughout the nation note that the move to decentralize schools requires a higher level of knowledge be present in every teacher who now has the power to make more decisions and that, in the vacuum sometimes created, individuals may be tempted to bring help in from the outside instead of developing themselves. But that is precisely the challenge to integrate individual professional growth and the development of the school as an organization (Futrell, 1991, p. 7). The wise use of research, the mentoring of new colleagues, team building, peer coaching, and site development are all immensely important aspects of the professional development challenge that must be met–if schools are to move into the future.

Conclusions and Directions

While numerous factors are simultaneously at play to threaten the future of students in at-risk situations, the 3 D's seem to be among the most formidable predictors of failure–deficit model schools, dysfunctional families, and a society seemingly disengaged from imminent threats to this group's future.

Predictors of Failure–Deficit Model Schools: Dysfunctional Families; Disengaged Society

Deficit Model Schools must be replaced by schools that build on students' backgrounds, knowledge, and strengths. Testing, categorizing, and driving the curriculum towards a narrowly-defined, discrete content base will only ensure that students in at-risk situations remain at risk. When the teacher stands up in front of his or her class of some 30 students in at-risk situations, will he or she see what they do know as a concrete foundation upon which to build their future, or dismiss this knowledge as unimportant and launch forth in detailing what they do not know? Discovering, enumerating, valuing, and expanding upon the cognitive, cultural, and linguistic strengths of students in at-risk situations presents a mandatory challenge to systemic school reformers.

Dysfunctional families are increasingly the norm in the lives of students in at-risk situations, and teachers are attempting to educate a whole child, not a disembodied brain. While teachers, principals, superintendents and others may feel it is not within the school's proper domain nor in its fund of assets to address the social, cultural, and nuclear family needs of students in at-risk situations, in fact no other institution so uniformly and thoroughly touches the lives of students as does school. Few other institutions so uniformly predict the future effectiveness of students in at-risk situations. Building an awareness and recognition of the school's singularly powerful ability to touch the lives of students in at-risk situations is a mandate for all concerned.

Only a society disengaged from the future of its precious national resources can fail to bring to bear upon the critical needs of students in at-risk situations the full force of its expertise, concern, and resources. Humanitarian and fiscal realities notwithstanding, the basic role of an ''educator'' is abdicated when research indicates that large groups of students are not succeeding and no palpable actions are taken. Only a society disengaged from its future can continue failing to meet the educational needs of students in at-risk situations.

Ideology and the Role of Ideology in Retention, Remediation, and Accelerated Learning

Research recurrently demonstrates the pivotal role of ideology in decisions regarding the retention, remediation, and schooling of students in at-risk situations. Ideology also plays a critical role in the selection, preparation, and development of the teachers who seek to serve this population. *Belief matters:* belief about who students are, what they are capable of doing, and where their learning should go as well as *belief* about who teachers are professionally as well as personally, what they feel about students, and how committed they are to overcoming the barriers to equity and excellence for all students. Undergirding most if not all of educators' decisions is an ideology that thoroughly informs practice, and that ideology can have a pivotal effect on the success or failure of students in at-risk situations.

At the heart of the accelerated schools movement is ideology–patterns of thinking about such daily practices as what are the conditions under which most students learn maximally; when students should learn; what constitutes a "learning" activity, where and by whom decisions should be made; what the learner is capable of. Upon such essentially ideological perspectives hangs the future of our children, our economy, and much of our nation.

"Buying into" a new ideology, sometimes as simple as convincing oneself that the cup is half full, not half empty, requires an acceptance of another's culture, the validity or real implications of another's upbringing, and the acceptance of the real problems faced by many children in at-risk situations. What results is a structured mismatching of the educational agenda of teachers and administrators to the culture and background of students (*Research Preview*, October 1992, p. 2), a mismatch which brings with it loss of motivation, discipline, and effective learning of any type.

By switching the focus from the half-empty to the half-full glass–to the strengths such as the survival skills, persistence, risktaking, imagination and humor which often fully blossom in the students considered at risk–the prospects of effective and equitable opportunity also blossom. What begins in the context of belief produces great hope and optimism for learners in at-risk situations; ". . . students can be more successful if their differences, experiences, and skills are recognized; if teachers understand the legitimacy of these differences; if the curriculum is sensitive to them; if staff development prepares teachers to work with them; and if the school environment communicates more positive messages and develops this relationship well" (*Research Preview*, October 1992, p. 2).

Preparing Students in At-Risk Situations for Success in the 21st Century

A greater understanding and acceptance of ideology's role in itself will not increase prospects for students in at-risk situations. Commitment is also a key. Becoming a total quality or accelerated school requires recognition of the need for change, provision for extensive staff development, parent education, and business participation. In his inaugural address, President Clinton commented on the need to address what is "wrong with America" using "what is right with America." "What is wrong with America" may be the society's inability to commit with a broad range of services to new initiatives to build on the many strengths of students in at-risk situations. Schools may continue to substitute instead a pattern of labelling, categorizing, and bequeathing these students a diminished future. "What is right with America" and what is most certain is the energy, potential, and resilience many of these students demonstrate and the necessity for our state and nation to commit whatever it takes to ensure their success.

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Compliance Statement

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a nonsegregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED BY THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1972; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1964; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986; AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or disability constitutes a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

THE STATE OF TEXAS

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